

SERMONS

Preach'd upon

Several Occasions:

By the Right Reverend Father in God,

Dr. JOHN WILKINS,

Late Lord Bishop of

CHESTER.

The Second Edition.

L O N D O N :

Printed for *Ri. Chiswell, Will. Battersby,*
and *Will. Rogers.* 1701.

SEERMONS

Preached upon

Several Occasions

By the Right Reverend Father in God

DR. JOHN WILKINS

Luc. Lord Bishop of



CHESTER

The Second Edition

LONDON

Printed for R. Clapham, Wm. Baines,
and Wm. Rogers, 1791.

THE
PUBLISHER
TO THE
READER.

I Easily foresee that in this censorious and inquisitive Age two Questions will be asked concerning the publishing of these Sermons, Why no sooner? or, Why at all? since so many come abroad every day that the Age is almost oppress'd with them. To the first I answer, Because I was not at leisure before to review them, and to get them transcribed out of a hand not legible enough for the Press: To the other,
A 2 Because

The PUBLISHER

Because though there be many Sermons yet not many such ; whether we consider in them, the usefulness and weight of the matters treated of ; or the suitable manner of handling them, in a stile of so much clearness and closeness and strength, as was fitted (as he himself was wont to wish) to the capacity of the weakest, and the conviction of the strongest ; or the solid or well-poized judgment of the Author in points of difficulty ; or lastly, the admirable candour and moderation of his temper in matters of difference and dispute.

And I purposely mention his Moderation, and likewise adventure to commend him for it ; notwithstanding that this Virtue, so much esteemed and magnified by wise men in all Ages, hath of late been declaimed against with so much zeal and fierceness, and yet with that good grace and confidence, as if it were not only no Virtue, but even the sum and abridgment of all Vices. I say, notwithstanding all this, I am still of the old Opinion, That moderation is a Virtue, and one of the peculiar ornaments and advantages of the excellent constitution of our Church, and must at last be the temper of her Members, especially the Clergy, if ever
we

to the READER.

we seriously intend the firm establishment of this Church, and do not industriously design by cherishing heats and divisions among our selves, to let in Popery at these breaches.

*As to the Author himself, I cannot forbear out of a generous indignation to see the ashes of so worthy a Man trampled upon, to take notice of a very slight, and, I think, unjust Character given of him in a late Book entituled, *Historia & Antiquitates Universitatis Oxoniensis*; whether by the Author of that Book, or by some other Hand, is variously reported, and I am not curious to know. The former part of the Character is chiefly made up of invidious reflections upon his carriage, and the circumstances of his condition in the late Times; in all which, because I did not then know him, I leave him to be vindicated or censur'd by those who were witnesses of his whole behaviour and temper in that time. The latter part of it consists of flat and ill-favour'd commendations; as, That he was *Philosophiæ & Mathematicæ addictissimus*, a great well-willer to Philosophy and the Mathematicks; the exact Character of an Emperick and an Almanack-maker, when these two*

The PUBLISHER

excellencies happen to be in conjunction : And then, that to the study of Divinity he added eloquentiam inconcionando non contemnendam, an eloquence in preaching not to be despised ; which though it be but a very cold and slender commendation both of his Divinity and his Eloquence, yet I must own something of kindness in it, because there is in good earnest a sort of Eloquence in Preaching that is to be despised. To finish the kindness, and that nothing might be omitted that might any ways cast an odium upon him, as he is placed next before Mr. Hobbs, so I cannot but observe in comparing their Characters, that there is apparently far less of envy and detraction in that of Mr. Hobbs's, than in this of the Reverend Bishop ; for which I can imagine no other reason but this, that Mr. Hobbs was then alive to speak for himself, but the dead bite not.

Upon the whole, it hath often been no small matter of wonder to me, whence it should come to pass that so great a Man, and so great a lover of Mankind, who had the inclination, the skill, and the opportunity to oblige so very many, and was so highly valued and revered by

to the READER.

by all that knew him, should yet have the hard fate to fall under the heavy displeasure and censure of those who knew him not : And that he who never did any thing to make himself one personal enemy, should have the ill fortune to have so many. I think I may truly say, that there are, or have been, very few in this Age and Nation, so well known, and so greatly esteemed and favoured, first by a judicious Prince, and then by so many Persons of high rank and quality, and of singular worth and eminency in all the learned professions, as our Author was.

And this surely cannot be denied him, it is so well known to many worthy Persons yet living, and hath been so often acknowledged even by his enemies, that in the late times of confusion, almost all that was preserved and kept up of Ingenuity and Learning, of good Order and Government in the University of Oxford, was chiefly owing to his prudent conduct and encouragement. Which consideration alone, had there been no other, might have prevailed with some there to have treated his memory with at least common kindness and respect. Not to do this to the dead, and in Character

THE PUBLISHER, &c.

of him that was intended to live to posterity, seems very hard; and yet I shall only make this soft reflection upon it, That there is no readier way for any man to bring his own worth into question, than by endeavouring to detract from the universally acknowledged worth of other men.

Having said this out of justice as well as friendship to the Author, and by way of necessary vindication of him from the envy endeavoured to be raised against him by some in this present Age, I leave these Discourses of his to justify themselves and him to Posterity.

John Tillotson.

THE

THE CONTENTS.

S E R M O N I.

Hebrews XI. 26.

FOR *he had respect unto the recompence of reward.* Page 1.

S E R M O N II. & III.

Romans XIV. 17, 18.

For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Page 41, 75.

S E R M O N IV.

Titus XI. 10.

That they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Page 99.

S E R.

The CONTENTS.

SERMON V. At a Visitation. Titus XI. 15.

*These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke
with all Authority; LET NO MAN
DESPISE THEE.* Page 131.

SERMON VI. Ecclesiastes I. 18.

*For in much wisdom is much grief; and he
that increaseth knowledge, increaseth
sorrow.* Page 165.

SERMON VII. Proverbs IV. 7.

*Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore
get wisdom.* Page 197.

SERMON VIII. Proverbs XIII. 20.

*He that walketh with wise men, shall be
wise; but a companion of fools shall be
destroyed.* Page 235.

SERMON IX. Ecclesiastes IV. 9.

Two are better than one. Page 263.
S E R-

The CONTENTS.

SERMON X. At the Spittle.
Isaiah XXXII. 8.

*The liberal deviseth liberal things, and by
liberal things shall he stand.* Page 289.

SERMON XI.
Luke VII. 5.

*For he loveth our nation, and hath built
us a Synagogue.* Page 327.

SERMON XII.
Proverbs XXV. 15.

A soft tongue breaketh the bone. P. 359.

SERMON XIII.
Philippians IV. 5.

*Let your moderation be known unto all men,
the Lord is at hand.* Page 391.

SERMON XIV. & XV.
Romans XII. 19.

*Dearly beloved, avenge not your selves,
but rather give place unto wrath; for it
is written, vengeance is mine, I will re-
pay, saith the Lord.* P. 429, 457.
The

The CONTENTS

SERMON X. Antisocialism
March XXII. 3.

The liberal and the conservative and the
socialist. Page 107.

SERMON XI.
Lent VI. 4.

For the love of our nation, and our faith.
Page 117.

SERMON XII.
Proverbs XXV. 11.

Affliction. Page 127.

SERMON XIII.
Isaiah IV. 2.

Let your meditation be upon the law of the Lord.
Page 137.

SERMON XIV. & XV.
Romans XII. 19.

Do not be angry, my friends, but let your anger
be kept in check. For the wrath of God is
revealed from heaven against all ungodliness
and wickedness that is in the world. Page 147.

The First Sermon.

HEBREWS XI. 26.

*For he had respect unto the recompence
of reward.*

AMongst the many doubts and scruples which are apt to disquiet the hearts of good Men, there are none more frequent than those occasioned by their own mistake, concerning the scope and ends they aim at. For when upon an impartial enquiry into their own condition, they find, that which has the chief influence upon them in any temptation or difficult service is not so much the deformity of sin, or the beauty of holiness, as the fear of Hell and the hopes of Salvation; this is apt to deject them with sad doubts and fears concerning their own sincerity, as if they

B

were

The First Sermon,

were yet only in a mercenary slavish state of *Unregeneracy*, and had not in any measure attained to those filial affections which belong to the state of *Adoption*. And by this means it comes to pass, that they do often needlessly disquiet themselves, and discourage others.

My design therefore from the *Text*, is so to clear up and state the Truth in this case, as may prevent those mistakes, and the ill consequences of them.

The chief scope of this *Chapter* is to set forth the nature and the power of *Faith*. The nature of it is described *ver. 1.* to be *the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen*. The Power of it is afterwards exemplified, by diverse instances out of the Old Testament, concerning many strange Difficulties and Trials, which those holy men of Antient times were enabled to undergo, being strengthened chiefly by this Grace of *Faith*. In the relation of which, there is an observable mixture of Examples, some of lesser note, with others of remarkable eminency, least weak Christians might be discouraged at those great Examples of *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, and *Moses*;

Moses ; as being unable ever to imitate such patterns.

Amongst the rest of these Examples, this of *Moses* is one of the most remarkable, and it may justly be set upon Record as a strange thing, that one in the heat of Youth, as he was, who had always been brought up amidst the delights and favour of the Court, and so by his Age and manner of Education inclined to Pleasures and Ambition; that such an one should notwithstanding, prefer the troubles of a Wilderness before the Pleasures of a Court, exchange all his honours for the present, and his hopes for the future, for certain reproach and troubles; *refusing to be called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter, and chusing rather to suffer affliction with the People of God.* And because it might be wondered at, upon what reason and motive he did this; the *Text* gives us an account of it, *he had respect unto the recompence of reward.*

The words will not need much explication. They give us an account what it was that did chiefly encourage *Moses* to so strange a choice; and that was, his belief that he should be a gainer by it, his expectation of a reward for

The First Sermon,

it. Ἀπέβλεπε γὰρ εἰς τὴν μισθοδοσίαν,
For he hath respect to the recompence of reward. There are but two principal terms in the *Text*, the one denoting the *Act*, and the other the *Object*.

1. The *Act*, ἀπέβλεπε, which we Translate, *he had respect to.* The word signifies properly the fixing of his Eye with intention, as men usually do at the mark which they aim at.

2. The *Object*, μισθοδοσία, the *recompence of Reward.* The word *Reward* doth not necessarily imply *Merit*, as is evident from *Rom. 4. 4.* where 'tis supposed that it may be of *Grace*; especially when it refers to the happiness of our future state in Heaven; which can never be strictly deserved by any work that we can do. But it signifies commonly the bestowing of any good thing before Promised, whether out of free Grace and Bounty, or by way of Hire or Wages.

The *Proposition* I shall insist upon from these words is this:

Prop.

That it is not only permissively lawful, or an indulgence allowed unto the infirmity of weak believers, but 'tis likewise necessary for the most eminent Saints, to strengthen and support themselves in their difficulties
by

by a special and particular regard to the recompence of reward.

A *Point*, which in many respects will deserve your attention, not being so commonly treated of, and the generality of Men being very apt to mistake about it; and yet a mistake in this may prove of very dangerous consequence, especially to one that lies under any fear or dejection of mind, by putting him into an incapacity of receiving any comfortable evidence concerning his own sincerity.

I am not ignorant that this inference may seem unto many a bold Paradox and Mistake, as being directly against what hath so commonly been asserted and taught by many others. And therefore I shall endeavour to be the more wary and considerate in the explication and proof of it.

For *Explication* of it: 'Tis requisite that the chief terms be cleared and distinguished.

1. *Reward* is of two kinds: 1. *Temporal*, consisting in a freedom from outward evils, and the enjoyment of all those blessings which concern our well being in this Life: Or 2. *Eternal*, which includes our deliverance from Hell, our

The First Sermon,

enjoyment of God, and all those inconceivable joys, which we hope for in the Life to come.

2. A Man may propose a thing to himself as his *End*, or Aim, two manner of ways, *Subordinately*, or *Principally* :

1. That is a *Subordinate* end, which we desire, not for it self, but as a means for the helping of us to something beyond it. 2. That is a *Principal* or *ultimate* end, unto which all our other prosecutions and endeavours are but subservient means.

Now to apply these distinctions to our present purpose :

1. Temporal rewards may be the subordinate end in our Obedience ; and therefore are they so often proposed to us in Scripture ; and for this reason, *Goodness hath the Promises of this Life.*

Joh. 4 15.

2. Temporal reward may at first be the chief occasion of mens being converted, and following Christ. The first reason which made the Woman of *Samaria* give ear to him, was her hopes to be eased of the trouble of coming so often to draw water at the Well. And there is no reason to doubt, but that amongst those Multitudes which at first followed our Saviour out of by-ends,

ends, some out of curiosity to see his Miracles, others out of want and hunger to feed upon his Loaves, others for their health that he might cure them, there were many that proved true Converts.

3. We must not propose Temporal rewards as our chief end; for then we shall venture upon any means whereby they may be procured, and consequently shall be put upon many unlawful courses, which may seem more likely to advantage our aims in this kind.

4. The chief and ultimate end of all our Actions should be the glory of God. Since all things are of *Him*, and through *Him*, 'tis but reason they should be to *Him* likewise. As the *Apostle* joyns them, *Rom. II. 36*. And thus far I suppose men do generally agree about this point. But they do not commonly apprehend or consider, that we do then make the glory of God our principal end, when we place our chiefest happiness in the enjoyment of him. So that we are not to look upon his glory as any thing abstracted from, or contrary to our own good, but that wherein it consists; God himself (in the phrase of the *Schools*) being our *objective*

happinefs : *I am thy exceeding great reward*, Gen. 15. 1. And our own Salvation, or our enjoyment of him, being our *formal* happinefs ; So that *that* Man who doth principally aim at his own Salvation, or the enjoyment of God, may properly be faid to make the glory of God his chief and ultimate end ; It being a vain imagination for us to fuppose any other or better way for the promoting of his glory, than by our own happinefs, which he principally defigns.

As for thofe Cafes which fome Men put, wherein thefe two are separated and opposed, as if a man fhould be content to be damn'd for the promoting of God's glory, &c. It were eafy to prove that they are inconfiderate, prefumptuous fuppositions, not without fuch wild inconfiftencies as are not to be fupposed, neceffarily implying one of thefe two abfurdities : Either that the chief end of every Man ought not to be his own happinefs, or that his happinefs doth not chiefly confift in the enjoyment of God ; both which are fundamental Principles. For the Glory of God is a Relative term, and fignifies nothing elfe but that excellency of his which results from all his other Attributes, his Mercy, Juftice,

Justice, Power, &c. Now which of his Attributes is like to be advanced by supposing a Creature that loves him in the highest degree should be made eternally miserable? So then the substance of this last conclusion thus explained, is this: That as Temporal rewards may be a subordinate end, so our Eternal reward must be the principal end of all our Actions.

And so much briefly for the stating or explication of the *Point*. As for the proof of it from *Scripture*, it seems very clear from the *Text*, wherein we have an account of that which enabled *Moses* for this difficult service, his looking to the reward; now if there had been any other aim, which had a greater influence and efficacy upon this Action of his, it would not seem agreeable to the Rules of reason, that a less encouragement should be set down, as the cause of it, when there was somewhat else upon which that effect had a nearer dependence.

We have another like instance to the same purpose, in this very *Chapter* concerning *Abraham*. It was questionless a hard duty for him to leave his Country and his Fathers house, to be a Sojourner in a strange Land; but that which encouraged

The First Sermon,

couraged him to obey God in this command, was a *double* reward which he expected : 1. *Temporal*, that he should receive that place for his inheritance, v. 8. 2. *Eternal*, a City that bath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God, v. 10.

So in the Chapter immediately before this, ver. 34. the *Apostle* speaking of some who are enabled to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, he renders this as their chief reason that encouraged them to it, because they knew in themselves that they had in Heaven a far better and a more enduring Substance. That which made St. Paul himself to esteem those temporal afflictions to be but light and momentany, was the consideration of that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in the Heavens. Upon this ground it is, that our Christian Progress is so often in Scripture compared unto a Race, where men put forth themselves to the utmost, and all for the hopes of obtaining a Crown. And in reference to this doth the *Apostle* profess of himself, that he did follow after, and reach forth, and press forward to the mark, that is, he did strain himself with his utmost diligence and industry, and all for a price (so it follows)

for

2 Cor. 4.
17.

1 Cor. 9.
25.

for the price of the high calling of God in Christ, Philip. 3. 12, 13, 14.

It were easy to cite abundance of other Scriptures to this purpose, but I hasten to the Reasons of the point.

Mat. 5. 12.
Rom. 2. 17.
1 Colos. 1.
4. 5.
Rev. 2. 10.
22. 14.
1 Tim. 6.
19.

1. From that Prime and Fundamental Law of Nature, whereby every created thing is by its most powerful and immediate instincts carried out to its own conservation. Nothing is more essential, not only to *rational*, but even to *sensitive* Nature, than that it should principally seek its own continuance and well-being, and all other things only in order to this: So that it may justly be questioned, whether it be in it self possible, or consistent with this Principle of Nature, for a Man to love any thing more than himself, or not for himself, upon some account or other? It is granted on all hands, that our *chief end*, our *summum bonum*, is our own *happiness*: All the difference is, wherein this happiness doth consist: some placing it in the *present enjoyments* of this Life, others in the future good things of another World; one Man is for the Court of *Egypt*, and to be called the Son of Pharoah's Daughter; another will rather *chuse Affliction* and reproach for the pre-

present, in expectation of some better reward afterwards. And though both do vastly differ about the several ways and means which they propose to themselves, yet they do and must agree in the same general scope and end of *happiness*. So that according to this *Principle*, to aim chiefly at our own well-being, is not only permissively lawful (as I said before) a thing which we may do; nor is it necessary only by way of precept, being that which a Man ought to do as his Duty; but 'tis likewise essentially necessary to our very nature; so that every Man must do it, nor can he do otherwise.

For the clearer explication of this, I shall crave leave to remember you of that distinction which I have elsewhere had occasion to insist upon, betwixt *Natural Principles*, and *Moral Duties*.

I. By *natural Principles*, I mean such kind of impressions, as are originally stamped upon the nature of things, whereby they are fitted for those services to which they are designed in their Creation: The *Acts* of which are necessary, and under no kind of liberty of being suspended. Herein did the Wisdom of the Creation consist, that
God

God was pleased to endue the kinds of things, with such natures, and principles, as might accommodate them for those works to which they were appointed. And he Governs all things by such Laws, as are suited to those several natures, which he had at first implanted in them. The most universal principle belonging to all kinds of things, is self-preservation, which in Man (being a rational Agent) is somewhat further advanced to strong propensions and desires of the Soul, after a state of happiness, which hath the predominancy over all other inclinations, as being the supreme and ultimate end, to which all particular designs and actions must be subservient.

2. By *Moral Duties* I mean, such Habits or Actions as are the most proper means for the attaining of this end. About these we have a liberty of Acting; to which we are to be induced in a moral way, by such kind of Arguments and Motives, as are in themselves sufficient to convince the reason.

So that self-love, and the proposing of happiness as our chief end, though it be the Foundation of Duty, that *basis* or *substratum* upon which the Law is founded,

ded, yet it is not properly a moral duty ; because every Man must do it necessarily, nor can he do otherwise.

Now to suppose that the Holy and Wise God should impose any thing as a duty upon his Creatures, which is inconsistent with those principles that he himself hath implanted in their natures, in their first Creation, is an apprehension as absurd in it self as it is unworthy of God.

This natural Principle of endeavouring after happiness, is the Foundation of all *Moral Duties* : For the highest moral inducement or motive to perswade men to any thing, is to represent such a thing as necessary to their happiness; so that our Obligation to Duty, is from the Law of God, but the great motive to it is Love to our selves, and a natural desire of happiness.

2. From the chief scope of all those promises and threats so frequent in Scripture, which are certainly intended for this very purpose to excite and quicken us in our Obedience. Now it cannot be denied, but that 'tis our duty to make that the aim and end of our actions, which the Scripture it self proposes to be so ; *namely*, to avoid the
evil

evil and obtain the good therein mentioned: *Deut. 30. 19, 20.* After that large Catalogue of Mercies and Judgments before recited, *Moses* puts them in mind, that he had set before them that day, life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore chuse life, that thou and thy seed mayest live, &c. upon this account it is that several Precepts in Scripture are press'd upon us with so many affectionate insinuations taken from the consideration of our own good: *Deut. 5. 29.* *Oh that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my Commandments always, that it might be well with them, and their Children after them.* And *Chap. 6. v. 24.* *The Lord Commanded us to do all these things for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, &c.* Now I say, it is not only lawful, but 'tis our duty to serve God upon his own Motives and Encouragements, and to make that a principal reason and end of our obedience, which he himself proposes to us under those Considerations.

3. From the nature of that Principle, which hath the chief influence upon the very life and actions of every Religious Man, and that is *Faith*. The
just

just shall live by Faith. As *Reason* is the Foundation of all humane actions, so is *Faith* of Religious duties. And every one under the notion of *Just* or *Religious*, is acted by this principle of *Faith*, as *brutes* are by *Sence*, and *Men* by *Reason*. Now *Faith*, v. 1. is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. Where among the things hoped for, and not seen, are clearly meant, the happiness and salvation which we expect hereafter, the rewards of a better life, which *Faith* doth as really discern in the promises, as if they were actually present to the Sense. Hence it is, that *Salvation* is said to be the end of our *Faith*, receiving the end of your *Faith* even the *Salvation* of your Souls, 1 Pet. 1. 9. So then if all Religious actions be derived from *Faith*, as the main root and principle of them, and if *Faith* doth chiefly refer to the rewards hoped for, and not seen, then it must needs follow, that it is as necessary for a believer to have a principal aim at the rewards, as it is for him to live by *Faith*: And that he may as well pretend to be above the life of *Faith*, as to be above the help of those encouragements of the rewards
and

and promises proposed in Scripture ; and so far as Faith hath an influence upon our Religious actions, so far must we respect the recompence of reward.

4. From the nature of our *Love*, which is another Principle, whereby the Soul is acted and carried on, in all its attempts and prosecutions. Now the proper object of Love, is not so much that which is *absolutely* good in in self, as that which is *relatively* so to us. And this being rightly understood will give very much light unto the chief difficulties about the Point in hand : 'Tis true indeed, there are in the *Deity*, Attributes of such a superlative goodness, that of themselves they do deserve infinitely more than the best of our affections ; but yet they prove affectual to the winning over of our love and desires so far only, as they are apprehended to be convenient for us. And therefore the exactest *Schoolman*, who spends most of his time and endeavours in the contemplation of those transcendent excellencies which are to be found in the *Deity*, after all his Studies may find his heart as cold and stupid, as

C

the

The First Sermon,

the most ignorant man. These things may raise his wonder, but not his affections, or in the phrase of a good Divine, they may dazle his understanding into a more distempered ignorance, but will never be able to ravish his Soul with those angelical flames of love, which sanctified men do feel on Earth, and the glorified Saints do fully enjoy in Heaven. Hence it is, that though the Devil doth understand those absolute perfections in the divine nature better than any man in the World, as that God is most wise, most holy, most glorious; yet he doth not love him, because he himself cannot receive any benefit by him. And upon the same ground is it, that though a man should be sufficiently perswaded, that his neighbour hath more grace than himself, and so is absolutely more lovely; yet he is not bound to love his neighbour better than himself; because it is not absolute, but relative good, that is the surest ground of love. And therefore the beloved Disciple who had most skill in the nature of this grace, tells us, that *we loved God because he loved us first*, 1 Joh. 4. 19. Implying some kind of necessity of apprehending God under

under the notion of a Friend or a Saviour, before we shall love him. *He that comes to God must* look upon him as *μισθωποδοτης*, a Rewarder, v. 6. Now, I say, if God's love to us, must be the chief reason of our love to him, then it is necessary for us in our best services to have a principal respect unto the reward, and those things which to us may be most advantageous. To which I shall add, That the phrase of *loving God with all our hearts, with all our souls, and with all our might* (so frequent in Scripture) doth signifie no more, than loving him as our chief end. We are allowed to love other things in such a measure and proportion as they are conducive to our real happiness, and as they are subordinate ends: But our chief and ultimate end is said to have all, because it comprehends under it all the intermediate.

5. Unto these I might add a *fifth* Reason, from those eminent examples in Scripture to this purpose. That of *Adam*, who whilst he was in the perfect state of innocence, and consequently could not have any such reluctancy or weakness in his nature, which might

make a good duty seem difficult; yet God saw it necessary for him, that his obedience should be fenced about with promises and threatnings. *Do this and live. The day thou eatest thereof thou shalt dye the death.* And therefore certainly it is not possible for us, who have corrupted natures, to attain unto any perfection above this. Nay, of *Christ* himself, it is recorded in the next Chapter to this, *vers. 2. That he endured the Cross, and despised the shame for the joy that was set before him.* And so too in the fifth Chap. *vers. 7, 8. He was afraid, and learned obedience by the things which he suffered.* Now you know that our Saviour was perfect Man: perfect in regard of all those things which are essentially and necessarily annexed to our natures, and perfect too in respect of that utmost holiness of which in this life we are capable; and therefore if he according to his humanity were thus quickned in his obedience, by hopes of reward, and fears of suffering, certainly then 'tis impossible for us whilst we are in this World to be ever above such helps.

I shall

I shall need to say no more for confirmation of the Point. There are many Objections against it, as being beside the common road and opinion; some of the chief of these, I shall endeavour briefly to examine and answer, and then proceed to Application.

The first *Objection* may be from that 1. *Object.*
common notion of Mercenary love and servile fear, which are usually thus described, when we do good out of love to the reward that belongs to it, and avoid evil out of fear of those judgments that may follow upon it. And these are frequently condemned as sinful affections, belonging to the Devil and wicked men, and no way agreeing to one that has the nature of a Child. To which purpose are those common sayings, *Oderunt peccare mali formidine pænæ*: And that of St. *Augustin*, Ep. 4. 4.
Qui Gehennas metuit, non peccare metuit sed ardere; ille autem peccare metuit, qui peccatum ipsum sicut gehennas odit. He that is restrained from sinning by the fear of Hell, is not so much afraid to sin as to be damned; he only doth truly fear sin, who hates it as he does Hell; with divers the like speeches.

Sol.

For answer to this: 1. As to the authority of such usual opinions or sayings, 'tis considerable that the Assertion here maintained, being acknowledged to be a *Paradox*, it cannot therefore in reason be expected, that bare humane Testimony should be looked upon as of any special force against it. And to speak as the truth is, 'tis too common a fault amongst good *Divines* to take up general notions upon trust, without applying them to the Rule by a particular examination.

2. As to the reason of this Objection, I humbly conceive with submission, that the proper nature of servile fear, is to drive us from God in rebellion and disloyalty, rather than to him in obedience and submission. And therefore the Metaphor is taken from a Slave, in whom the fear of his Master makes him run away from him, and desire that he may not return to him again, as it was with the *Amalekite's* servant, 1 Sam. 30. 15. When men are afraid of God, and fly from him as an enemy, whose ruine they wish, according to that common saying: *Quem quisque metuit, periisse expetit:*

expetit : So that a man cannot do good out of a servile fear, this doth not put him upon the performance of his duty, but of his lusts; such was that fear in *Adam*, which made him fly from, and endeavour to hide himself and his faults from God; such was that in *Saul* and *Judas*, which made one of them run 4-
 upon his sword, and the other to strangle himself. The disposition of a child is fear mixed with love: The fear of the rod may bring a child to his father in filial obedience, tho it drive the servant from his Master in a slavish disloyalty. And so likewise for Mercenary love; which is when reward can hire us to any thing without any consideration of the good or evil of it, as in those two examples of *Saul* and *Judas*, one of whom would disobey God to win the spoils of his enemies, and the other betray his Master for *thirty pieces of silver*. Such was that also in *Balaam*, of whom the *Apostle* saith, that *he loved the wages of* 2 Pet. 2.
unrighteousness, because of his strong 15.
 inclinations to curse *Israel*, that he might obtain *Balaac's* reward.

'Tis true indeed, if there be in a man's heart any secret desire of liberty to sin, and a grief because there is punishment annexed to it, such a disposition of the soul is unquestionably evil; and of such alone it may be truly said, that he does not fear to sin, but to be punished, as *St. Austin* speaks. And yet it does not follow but that sin ought to be avoided for the punishment denounced against it. And he who out of consideration of punishment is afraid to offend God (supposing that he doth not in his heart actually desire any thing against the Law and Justice of God) such an one doth as he ought; for punishments are truly to be feared, and they are therefore proposed in Scripture to deter us from sinning.

2. *Obj. 7.*

2. Another *Objection* is this: If in our obedience we may chiefly aim at our own private benefit, then it seems that we may love our selves better than God; nay then we set up our selves in his room. For that which we propose as our chief end, that we make our God: And this (says one) is the highest impiety imaginable; why, a man had better pull the Sun out of

of Heaven than pull God thence, which he doth whilst he makes a Deity of himself. 'Tis not better than the *Indians* Idolatry, who adore the Devil; nor less absurd than the *Ægyptians* Devotion, who worship the Onyons and Leeks. God is to be loved for himself; and to love him for any thing else, were to place somewhat above him.

For answer to this, you may please *sol.* to remember what was said before, That we do then make God our chief end, and give him that supreme honour which he expects, when we place all our happiness in the enjoyment of him. He doth not propose himself to us in Scripture as abstracted from our good, but as comprehending it. So he tells *Abraham, I am thy exceeding great reward: Gen. 15.1.* So that the loving of God for himself and his own excellency, so much talked of in *Mystical* Divinity, is but another name, 'tis not another thing, from Heaven and Salvation: For the enjoyment of God is Heaven. And as a man's love is to any thing, so must his desire be of enjoying it. Nor can it otherwise be, but that if God be our *objective* happiness, our enjoyment of him

him must be our *formal* happiness. The force of this Argument supposes those things to be separated and opposed, which do necessarily involve one the other.

3. *Object.*

3. A third *Objection* may be from those two great examples of *Moses*, the instance of the *Text*; and *St. Paul*, as some think, the Pen-man of it.

1. As for *Moses*, we read of him, that he was so desirous of his brethren's pardon, that rather than his request for them should be denied, he would have his own name *blotted out of the Book of Life*, *Exod. 32. 32.*

2. And *St. Paul* speaking of the rejection of the *Jews*, professes that he wished *himself to be an Anathema from Christ*, for his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh, *Rom. 9. 3.* From whence it may seem that these holy men had so fully cast off all respects of their own, that they could wish themselves damned for the Salvation of their brethren. So far were they from aiming principally at the recompence of reward.

Sol.

To that of *Moses*, I answer: 'Tis evident from the Context, that 'tis to be understood of temporal death, not eternal.

eternal. In the 10th. *Verse* of that *Chapter*, God had told *Moses*, that if he would let him alone, to destroy that People for their Idolatry, he would make of him a great Nation, ver. 32. *Moses* rather desires that God would spare the People, and destroy him; rather than not forgive their sin, blot me, I pray thee, out of the Book which thou hast written. The phrase of a written Book, being a metaphorical expression, and signifying no more than the purpose of God, which he hath decreed within himself in reference to future events; so that to be cut off by an untimely death, is to be blotted out of this Book. Now to die for a man's Country is no more than what every wise and valiant man is engaged to by the Rules of Morality. There being a happiness beyond and above a temporal life, which may be purchased by such sufferings.

As to *St. Paul's* wish of being an *Anathema from Christ*, such a desire if understood in the strictest sense of it, cannot be lawful upon any condition; the reason is, because a man cannot properly be an *Anathema from Christ*, unless he be in a state of sin, and consequently

sequently an enemy to God, as well as in a state of misery. And there is no imaginable condition that can make it lawful for a man to wish himself in a state of sin : Besides, that it implies a gross contradiction, as if a man out of the zeal of his love to God, should wish himself to be an enemy to him, and to be eternally separated from him.

Or if any shall suppose the meaning of his wish to be, That he might be only separated from the enjoyment of Christ, without being an enemy to him : Besides that this is inconsistent with the Divine goodness, that those who love him in the highest degree, should be debarred from the enjoyment of him : It hath in it likewise a plain contradiction to the nature of love and zeal.

The proper notion of loving any thing with all our might, is so to esteem and desire it as to place our chief happiness in the enjoyment of it. And zeal is nothing else but a warm anger against any thing which may hinder us in this fruition. So that for a man out of the Zeal of his love to God, to be content not to enjoy him, must

must needs be a plain contradiction.

And as for such a degree of love to our brethren as the strictest sense of these words doth imply, it is neither lawful, nor possible: 1. Not lawful, because God hath proposed the love of our selves as the pattern of our love to others; and it is not fit that in drawing the portraicture, we should spoil the pattern. That order in Charity to which we are obliged doth not permit this. 2. Not possible, because such a love would be in some sense greater than that which Christ shewed unto the World, and *greater than that hath no man*, Joh. 15. 13. So that this phrase is not to be understood in the strictest literal sense; or if it should, 'tis by no means lawful, and therefore not to be drawn into example.

What the most proper and genuine sense of that Scripture may be, is not so easy to determine. St. Hierom understands it *de occisione corporali*; so making it equivalent with that other saying of the same Apostle, 1 Thes. 2. 8. *We were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our Souls (or lives) because ye were dear unto us.* So Christ is said

to be made a curse for us, by reason of that ignominious death, &c.

Photius.

Some others would have the sense of it thus interpreted; I could wish you were made partakers of the true faith, though I were as yet alienated from it.

Dr. Hammond.

Others by this phrase of *Anathema from Christ*, suppose to be meant Excommunication from the Church, which is the body of Christ, with those consequences, which did commonly ensue upon it; ὁλεθρὸν σαρκὸς the destruction of the flesh, i. e. several diseases and temporal afflictions, which the Apostle was content to undergo for his brethrens sake.

'Tis observed by some, that amongst the Jews (unto whose customs and practice the *Apostle* doth here allude) there were two sorts of *Anathema's*, the one styled *Niddui*, by which men were debarred the external Communion of the Church for the space of 30 days: The other *Cherem*, which did extend to a perpetual exclusion from the Church by execrations and curses. The *Apostle* he styles it *Anathema Maranatha*. 'Tis thought that his wish in this place, doth allude only to

to the first of these, and doth import only his being content to undergo some temporary, short separation from the Church-privileges, and from the consolations of Christ, but not an eternal separation from the Spirit and Grace of Christ.

Others would have this to be the sense of the words, as if he should have said, I could be content for my brethrens sake, not only to want the honour of my Apostleship, but in respect of my outward condition, to be the most contemptible amongst Christians, as those are who are Anathematized or Excommunicated.

That which to me seems the most rational solution of this difficult Scripture, is to look upon it as an Hyperbolic expression (of which we have several other instances in Scripture) which are not to be interpreted according to the strict literal sense of the words, but according to the drift of the speaker: St Paul being under great prejudices amongst his Country-men as an enemy to them, for his defection from them, and adhering to the Christian assemblies, doth endeavour to vindicate himself from those prejudices,

judices, by a most solemn protestation, that there was nothing imaginable, and possible for him to do or suffer, for their benefit, but what he was most ready and willing unto. So far was he from deserving to be thought their enemy: Which sense seems likewise to be favoured by the verb *ἐὐχόμενος*, *optarim*, the potential; I could wish, answerable to that other place, *Gal. 4. 15. I bear you record, that if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.*

Hence it is easy to collect what we are to judge of those expressions like to this, ascribed to divers others. That of one of the Popish Saints, who wished that she her self might be cast into Hell, upon that condition that she might stop the mouth of it, so that none might ever enter afterwards. That of *Anselm*: That if Hell and Sin were set before him, he would rather chuse Hell, than Sin: That he had rather be in Hell without Sin, than in Heaven with it. That of *another*, that he did not so much fear and hate the torments, as the blasphemies of the damned; with divers the like expressions frequent in the Popish *Legend*, and *Mystical Divines*. Now

Now I say, though it is possible that such kind of speeches may proceed from those that are good, in some special zeal and heat of their affections, yet they are not from a serious considerate judgment, but being compared with the rule will be found to be unwary boasting expressions, pretending to a higher degree of sanctity than men are capable of, or than is required from them.

I fear I have been too long in confirmation of this Point: I shall be but very brief in the Application of it.

1. This may serve to confute that common and uncomfortable error, so frequently vented both from the *Pulpit*, and the *Press*, namely, That 'tis not enough to prove our sincerity, that we are able to do good out of love to the reward, and so to avoid evil for fear of punishment; wicked men may go so far; every one that is sanctified, must be able to hate sin chiefly for its own deformity, and to love goodness for its own comeliness and beauty, and so far make the glory of God his chief aim (not any respect of his own) that if his damnation might conduce more

D

to

to God's glory, he were bound to desire that, rather than to be saved: Unto those that talk at this rate, I might suggest that advice of the Wiseman, *Eccles. 7. 16. Be not righteous over much, neither make thy self over-wise, why shouldst thou destroy thy self?* That is, do not pretend to such holiness, as thou art not capable of, *this is to be over-righteous*; do not invent such precepts as the Scripture doth not prescribe; *this is to be over-wise*; by limiting salvation unto such rules as thou art not able to conform unto, thou mayest be said *to destroy thy self*. It would be a sufficient confutation of such men, if they could impartially examine their own hearts, what that motive is which hath the chief influence upon them in all their difficult services, whether or no it be not, or should not be, the promises of the Gospel apprehended by faith; and if so, it may be a sufficient shame and check to them for the venting of such doctrines, according to which they themselves must needs remain in a comfortless condition: St. Paul reckons upon it as being a good degree of grace, that

that he was able to look more at the 2 Cor. 4.
things which are not seen, than upon the 18.
things which are seen.

'Tis the folly and peevishness of our
natures to run into extremities of all
kinds: As, the generality of men on
the one hand to licentiousness and pro-
phaness; so some on the other, to
frame unto themselves such rules of
holiness as God doth not require, be-
ing wise above that which is written. Some
of the *School men* and *Mystical Divines* Self. 6.
have been so rigid in this kind, that Can. 8.
the *Council of Trent* were fain to make a
particular *Canon* against them. Wherein
they denounce an *Anathema* unto any
one who shall say, 'tis unlawful for
a man to avoid sin out of the fear of
Hell.

It cannot be denied but that there
is a vast difference amongst men, in
reference to their performance of du-
ties; as for an unregenerate person,
he cannot set about any good duty
without much pain and disquietness;
spiritual services are utterly against
the bent of his inclinations; when he
is engag'd in them he is out of his
element, like a Fish in the air.

Whereas on the contrary, the more any one grows in grace, the more his nature is spiritualized, the more amiableness does he see in the ways of God, and he can walk in them with a kind of complacency and naturalness, as better agreeing with his sanctified desires; and sometimes perhaps the thought of God's excellencies, may in respect of sense be actually more incumbent and pressing upon his Spirit, than the consideration of reward; but that which in a man's general course, is the root and principal encouragement against all difficulties, must be this recompence of reward.

2. Let us be exhorted to imitate this Example in the Text: In all our temptations and difficulties, to propose unto our selves those great and precious promises which are offered in the Scriptures.

Learn to judge concerning the true difference of things, and to value them according to their real worth, and to prefer the things that are not seen. It is in this place your trade and business, to be skilled in all the advantages of Exchange, and it will be a very great shame

shame and folly for men that profess Christianity, so to be immersed in these present sensual things as to neglect their future hopes. 'Tis observable how the Scripture doth in several places set forth this recompence of reward, under such kind of descriptions as might render it most desirable to all sorts of men : Sometimes 'tis stiled *Riches*, *hid Treasure*, a *Pearl* or *Jewel of inestimable value* : Sometimes *Honour*, the *sitting upon a Throne*, the *inberitance of a Kingdom*, a *Crown of Life and Glory* : Sometimes *delight*, *fulness of joy*, *Rivers of pleasures* ; that men might not be tempted by any thing else, to a neglect of this. And therefore in every particular temptation, whether of allurement or danger, we are to fly for refuge unto the hope that is set before us, remembering that *great and terrible day of the Lord*, &c.

The true reason why men are so easily overcome by these present worldly hopes and fears, is because they do not labour to strengthen and to stir up their Faith, in respect of those future things which are not seen. It

could not be, if men did really believe and consider what they profess, that they should be so foolish *as to run upon mischief, and forsake their own mercies.* It was a considerable advantage to *Moses* to be looked upon as *the son of Pharaoh's daughter*, and yet he esteemed this as nothing in comparison of the inheritance of a far better Kingdom, and therefore he despised all other things that came in competition with *that*. We have none of us perhaps so great temptations, but yet we have as great encouragements as he, having a share in the same promises, and being partakers of the like hopes; and therefore we ought to be very much ashamed, upon every slight occasion to walk so unanswerably to them. Though some men may have greater temptations than others, yet this is our privilege, that no man can have so great temptation to sin as he has to his duty.

Do but consider the advice of the *Apostle*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 14. Speaking of a Christians future happiness, *Wherefore, beloved, since you look for such things, be diligent, that ye be found in peace without spot,*

spot, and blameless. Let me add the like speech of another *Apostle*, with which I shall conclude, *2 Cor. 7. 1.* *Since we have such promises, and entertain such expectations, Let us therefore cleanse our selves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

The End of the First Sermon.

The Second Sermon.

ROM. XIV. 17, 18.

For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of Men.

THere is nothing of greater importance towards the healing of the minds of men, than to have a right understanding of those Principles, by which they profess to be guided in their differences. Now tho it should be granted that some of the *Leaders* amongst all Parties, are chiefly swayed by their particular interests and desires of dominion; yet because they have done, and

and will always pretend, at least, to found their differences upon grounds of Religion, whereby those that are *Followers* amongst them are heated to a zeal and eagerness in opposition of one another: Therefore it is of very great consequence that men should be rightly informed, what Religion is? Wherein it chiefly consists? What are the main things to be contended for about it? How men should demean themselves in matters of lesser moment? In what method the obligation of things is to be stated? And in brief, how they should so order their conversations, as to be both *accepted of God, and approved of men*? Than which nothing can more effectually conduce to that general peace and settlement, which these Nations are now in expectation of: To which purpose I have made choice of this *Text*.

The occasion and dependance of the Words is this.

There being in those Primitive times many Converts, as well amongst the *Gentiles* as *Jews*, that different way wherein they had been severally instituted, did by accident prove a great impediment to their joyning together

ther for promoting the work of the Gospel.

The *Gentiles* having been before given up to a most irrational way of Worship of dumb Idols, which had no tolerable plea for the reason or institution of it, were upon their receiving of Christianity, wholly won over to the simplicity of the Gospel. Whereas the *Jews* having been educated in another way of Worship, enjoined by God himself, confirmed with many miracles, by the hand of *Moses*, whose Doctrine and Laws for a long time together had been preached amongst them, in every City, being read in the *Synagogues every Sabbath-day*, Act. 15. 21. They could not so easily be won over to embrace the Gospel, so as wholly to renounce all their legal institutions, but were apt to think that some of them might very well consist together with Christianity.

There are two instances which the Apostle doth particularly insist upon, in this Chapter, that of *meats*, and *days*. Nothing was more detestable among the *Jews*, than to eat of their *forbidden meats*; and there was no kind of torment but they would undergo,

*2 Maccab.
Chap. 7.*

rather

rather than be induced to offend in this kind; as having radicated in them a general abhorrency from such things, grounded upon Religion.

And as for the observation of *Days* wherein the solemnity of Worship did consist, it could not be expected but that the Religious *Jews* must needs be much prejudiced against any such way as did pretend to an abolition of them.

Now in this case, there were but *two* ways of obviating this difference: 1. Either the *Apostles* must insist upon their Apostolical Authority, and by some *Canon* or Decree condemn these Superstitious Scruples; they themselves having been the chief Preachers of the Gospel, and confirmed it by many signs and miracles, might with reason expect, that they should be owned as infallible Judges, in a controversy of this nature, in whose determination others ought to acquiesce. And there are but few men in the World, engaged in Parties, who upon such an advantage would not rather have enclined to this course. Or else, 2. They must find out some expedient for this difference, to accommodate

moderate matters unto the present state of things, and to moderate the rigor on either hand. And it seemed good to the *Holy Ghost* and to the *Apostles*, rather to take this way, which is the main scope of this Chapter. Wherein the *Apostle* lays down several rules to regulate mens carriage in cases of this nature.

1. To forbear offensive disputes about these things, *vers.* 1.

2. To avoid despising and condemning one another upon this account. He that hath a clear light concerning his own just liberty, must not despise another who comes short in this persuasion; and the other must not judge him, as being loose and irreligious in doing more than he ought, *v.* 3. This he confirms by these Reasons.

1. You have no commission and authority to judge another mans servant, *vers.* 4.

2. Tho you both differ about these controverted Points, yet you both agree in these other Rules, that no Man ought to put a stumbling-block, or occasion to fall, in his brother's way, *vers.* 13. And that every one ought to walk
chari-

charitably, v. 15. And to take care *that their good be not evil spoken of*, v. 16. And the Rules in which both sides do agree, ought not to be violated in the prosecution of those things about which they differ: And then in the words of the *Text*, he pitches upon another cogent reason to the same purpose, Because *the Kingdom of God* consists not in such things as were of the same and the like nature with the controverted Points; such things are no indication of a man's good or bad state, and therefore you ought not to judge of mens conditions by them; but in those more weighty and substantial duties of *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*; whosoever lays out his strength and zeal in things of this nature, shall be sure (though he do mistake in other matters) to be both *accepted of God, and approved of men*. That's the connexion of the words:

The *Text* contains a description of those chief things wherein Religion consists.

1. *The thing described.*
2. *The description it self.*

By that phrase, *the Kingdom of God*,
is

is meant, Christianity, or the state of Religion under the Government of the *Messiah*, which was by the *Jews* commonly stiled the *Age of the Messiah*, or the *Kingdom of God*, according to that famous Prophecy of *Daniel*, c. 2. v. 44. That *the God of heaven should set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed, but should stand for ever*. Conformably whereunto the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews*, c. 12. v. 28. calls the state and dispensation of the Gospel a *kingdom which cannot be moved*.

This is described both by the *Matter*, *Principle*, and *Effects* of it :

I. The *Object matter*, wherein it consists, and that both *Negatively* and *Positively*.

I. *Negatively*, 'Tis not meat and drink, that is, it consists not in, or is not to be judged of by those more circumstantial parts of Religion, referring to external observances ; which as to the acts of them may be performed by all kind of Persons, whether good or bad ; and do not necessarily suppose or require any habitual goodness to the doing of them. Not but that 'twas a sin to neglect these under the law, and 'twas a duty to be rightly perswaded concerning

ing our liberty from them under the Gospel ; but yet not of such moment or consequence , that a man might hereby judge of his own or another's state.

2. *Positively*, But in *righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*. That is, in such internal habits and dispositions of the soul , whereby the mind is renewed and changed , and made conformable to the image of God ; particularly,

1. *Righteousness*, δικαιοσύνη, this is twofold : 1. *Imputed*, stiled the righteousness of Faith : Of which the *Apostle* had treated at large in the eleven first Chapters of this *Epistle*.

2. *Inherent* , that is such a sanctification of the nature, whereby a man is carried on to a universal conformity unto the Moral Law, both in respect of the first and second Table. Which latter seems to be more immediately intended in this place, because it may more properly be considered under the notion of a duty , and is likewise the most obvious and natural sign, whereby a man may judge of his estate : And is elsewhere called *grace*, in opposition to *meats*, Heb. 13. 9.

It

It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

2. *Peace*, εἰρήνη, this Word also is capable of a twofold sense. 1. It may signify a quiet state of mind, arising from an assurance of our reconciliation with God. In which sense it is to be understood Rom. 5. 1. *Being justified by Faith, we have peace with God.* This is sometimes stiled εὐθυμία, and is rather a privilege than a duty. Or else 2. It may signify the grace of *Peaceableness*, the desire and study of promoting peace amongst one another, a readiness and willingness of mind to agree with such in affection from whom we differ in judgment. And this is properly our duty, being sometimes stiled εἰρηνοπόνησις and φιλησυχία, which though it be but a branch of that general righteousness signified in the former Word, yet the *Apostle* thought fit to specify this in particular, because of its suitableness to the business in hand. And that this is the proper sense of the Word in this place, may appear by v. 19. where he returns again to a further enforcing of this duty, *Let*

The Second Sermon,

us therefore follow after the things which make for peace.

3. *Joy in the Holy Ghost* : This phrase likewise is capable of a *twofold* sense.

1. It may signify a *blessing or privilege*, consisting in the enlargement of the Soul, by the shining in of the light of God's Countenance, when he is pleased to shed abroad a sense of his love in our hearts, and by that means to fill us *with joy unspeakable and glorious*. Or 2. A *Grace or Duty*, which Christians are bound to labour after, and to attain: and that is, quiet submission to every dispensation of providence, an ability of rejoycing in an afflicted estate, as being acted by principles above these sensible things. This is elsewhere stiled, *rejoycing in hope*, Rom. 5. 2. — 12. 12. And in another place, 1 *Thes.* 1. 6. the *Apostle* doth particularly explain what he means by this *joy in the Holy Ghost*, namely the bearing of affliction with joy; *ye received the word in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost*. 'Tis stiled by this name for its opposition to the joy of the World, which is grounded only upon external prosperity; whereas that which must support a man under an

an

an afflicted estate, is something of an higher nature.

2. Religion is here described by its principle or end, *Whosoever in these things serveth Christ*. There must be a serving of Christ in these things, that is, 'tis not the mere performance of such moral duties as are of natural obligation, unless they be done in obedience to him as our Lord and Law-giver, and in reliance upon him, for his pardon and acceptance as our Priest and Saviour that can make us *acceptable to Christ*, or entitle us to the name of *Christians*.

3. From the *fruits and effects* of it. It renders a man *acceptable to God and approved of men*. 1. *Accepted of God* ἐνάρπες Θεῷ Θεῷ, well-pleasing to God. 'Tis the same with that Word, *Acts 10. 35. In every Nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him*. 2. *Approved of men*, δοκιμὸν, 'tis an expression frequently applied to gold, to signify its purity and excellency; and to money in general to express its currantness. So the *Septuagint*, Gen. 23. 16. ἀργυρίου δοκιμῶν, currant money. And from thence 'tis translated to signify the integrity

of persons, such as pass for currant and approved amongst all sorts of men.

The Words thus explained may very properly afford these *three Observations*.

1. That there are some things in Religion, wherein a man may be very forward and zealous, and yet fall short of the Kingdom of God, *'Tis not meat and drink.*

2. There are other things in Religion, wherein if a man be faithful and sincere, he shall be accepted by God, tho he should mistake and fall short of his duty in other things, *But righteousness and peace, &c.*

3. The Reason why Christians of several persuasions are less approved to one another, is because they lay out more of their zeal and strength in those lesser things, *meat and drink*, than in those of greater consequence.

Prop. I.

I. *There are some things in Religion wherein a Man may be very forward and zealous, and yet fall short of the Kingdom of God.*

Not as if these things were to be despised or neglected; they are matters of Religion, and therefore must be of con-

consequence. And 'tis a man's duty to labour after a right persuasion concerning the just bounds of his liberty. And 'tis no less than a sin and superstition for a man to be needlessly scrupulous in such things. But yet these things are not so essential to a state of grace, but that, as on the one hand a mistake in them shall not prove so pernicious as to make a man (who is otherwise sincere) incapable of the Kingdom of God: So neither is a right persuasion or a zeal in them, so essentially good as to entitle a man to it.

To the same purpose is that *Text*, 1 Cor. 8. 8. *Meat commendeth not a Man to God: for neither if we eat are we the better, neither if we eat not are we the worse.* Heb. 13. 9. *'Tis good that the heart be established with graces, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been busied therein.*

Gal. 6. 5. *In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.* And elsewhere 'tis said, *bodily exercise profiteth little*; with several other the like Scriptures, which I cannot stand to enumerate.

I shall briefly suggest these two *Reasons of the Point.*

1. Because these things *do not make us the better*, as was said in that fore-cited place, 1 Cor. 8. 8. And therefore cannot entitle us to the Kingdom of God. *They profit not*, Heb. 13. 9. That is, they are not effectual to the things of greatest consequence. They do not improve a man as to his state of holiness, his real intrinsical worth. There is not any natural moral good in them, but they are so denominated, because we do hereby exercise our moral righteousness and obedience, which is good in it self: These things are mere *externals*, whereas the *Kingdom of God* is chiefly *internal* and *spiritual*.

2. Because these kind of Services do not necessarily require or suppose that which is the very life and power of Religion, but are things of another kind and sphere, and might be observed upon other by-ends. A *few* might have nothing at all of inward grace in his heart, and yet be very scrupulous in the observance of *meats* and *days*. And usually men think to compensate their want of the substance of

of Religion, by their zeal in circumstances: And besides, any external act of Religion, suppose dying for it, may be performed upon such natural principles, as are wholly heterogeneous to it. So that these things do neither make us holy, nor suppose us to be so; and therefore can be no good evidence.

The Use and Application of this should be to enquire, What things there are now in controversy amongst us in these times, answerable to these differences about *meat* and *drink*, and to proportion our demeanour towards one another in reference to such things, according to the Rules here prescribed.

It is not very easy, nor perhaps would it be prudent, to enumerate any particular list of such things as are now under debate amongst us in these times: But you may know them by these three general Notes.

1. They are such things as are not against natural light, otherwise they would have a moral vitiousness in them, and be opposite to that righteousness mentioned in the other clause.

2. They are such things as good men, true believers, may and do differ about.

3. They are such things as wicked men and hypocrites may be very zealous for, or against, on both sides. Whatever the thing be, either concerning Practice or Opinion, which comes under all these notes (not any one of them) it may be safely brought under the same Rules that are here given concerning the differences about *meats* and *drinks*: Namely these three.

1. First not to think our selves better men than others, for our advantages in things of this nature. The *Apostle* saith *they do not commend us to God*, and therefore should not commend us to our selves. He saith they do not make us better, and therefore we should not think our selves better for them. And besides they are common to hypocrites and wicked men, and upon that account cannot be any special arguments of our goodness.

2. We are not to think the worse of others for their differences of this nature, so as to despise them, or censure them. It cannot be, but that we must needs think the worse of their actions

OF

or opinions; because whoever judges himself to be in the right, must needs conclude those of an opposite persuasion or practice to be in the wrong: But we are not upon this account to censure such persons as to their estates and conditions, as if they were not sincerely Religious, nor in favour with God. For though they should be erroneous and mistaken in their judgments in such things, yet if their conversation be more just and righteous than ours, if more humble and peaceable, they are thereupon to be accounted better than we are; both more *acceptable of God*, and more *approved of men*.

3. We are not to prosecute any Truth or Duty of this nature, to the prejudice of such things as are of greater moment. There are several *Truths* which are not of so great consequence as *peace*, and *unity*, and *charity*. And therefore in such things there ought to be a mutual forbearance towards one another; and men should endeavour by all means of amity and kindness to joyn together, for the promoting of those more substantial Truths and Duties, wherein they agree according

ding to that Rule of the *Apostle*, Philip. 3. 15, 16. *And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you : Nevertheless whereto we have already attained , let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.*

There are two things by which men are usually provoked to heat and eagerness, in their differences of this kind. 1. A false apprehension of the weight and necessity of their opinions, by reason of those consequences which they fasten to them, and will have to stand or fall with them. And 2. An apprehension of their great clearness and perspicuity, upon which account they conceive no man ought to oppose them. Now this case in the *Text* wants not pretences of either kind: 'Twere not difficult to infer very dangerous consequences from the joyning together of *Mosaical* observances, with Christian Religion; and then whatever any mans persuasion may be, as to the certainty and perspicuity of his particular opinion, I am sure he cannot have greater, better grounds of confidence, than there were for this case in the *Text* about *meats* and *drinks*. Where besides the evidence from the nature

nature of the thing, there was likewise most express *Apostolical* authority, for the stating the question, that the legal institutions about meats and drinks were abolished. And yet, out of tender respect to those who had contrary prejudices, they were not to trouble them with unnecessary disputes, but to *bear their infirmities*, and every one to study how to please his neighbour for his good to edification, Chap. 15. ver. 1.

If it be objected, That St. Paul elsewhere shews much zeal and vehemence about these very points of *Mosaical* observances, as where he calls the great sticklers for them *Dogs*, *Circumcision*, wishes them cut off, &c. To this it may be answered :

1. This vehemence of his is directed against false brethren, such contentious persons as were not sincere, *Philip. i. 16*. And *Pareus* thinks this was after that solemn determination of this case in an *Apostolical Council*, *Acts 15*.

2. It was for want of this candor and moderation which here he advises unto. Because they laid so great weight upon their Opinions as to make

make them necessary to salvation; and would not indulge or shew forbearance towards one another for these kind of differences.

3. For the scandal hereby occasioned, which is a moral evil; and upon this account he is sometimes pretty quick and warm, even against such as were sincere and good men. This was the ground of that contest betwixt him and *Peter*, *Gal. 2. 11*. The case was this: *St. Peter* was the Apostle of the Circumcision, having a more peculiar relation to the *Jewish* Converts; yet when he resided at *Antioch*, where there lived multitudes of converted *Gentiles*, it was his usual practice most freely to converse and eat with them, as owning them for brethren: But afterwards, when some *Jews* were sent thither from *Jerusalem*, out of fear to offend them, he wholly withdrew and separated himself from all conversation with the *Gentiles*; and by his example, the other believing *Jews* were likewise carried away to the same practice, as if they had so great a zeal for *Mosaical* observances, that they could not own such as did not observe them. Now this the Apostle

postle *Paul* styles *dissembling*, v. 13. *Not walking uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel*, v. 14. In which respect there was a moral evil in it, towards which we are not bound to shew the same tenderness. And it was a thing of so dangerous consequence, in respect of discouragement and scandal to all the *Gentiles*, that upon this occasion *St. Paul withstood him to the face*. Which carriage of his, was not opposite, but most suitable unto that advice of tenderness and forbearance which is here prescribed.

To shut up all in a word ; it would exceedingly conduce to our common peace and settlement, in times of differences and controversy, if those Rules of Christianity so often inculcated in Scripture, were more regarded and observed amongst the Professors of it.

That men would *be wise unto sobriety*, and *not above what is written*. *Not thinking more highly of themselves and their abilities than they ought*, Rom. 12. 3. But be ready to *condescend to men of lower parts*, v. 16. And to demean our selves towards every one according

ding to the *different measure of gifts* ; which God hath been pleased to dispense to them ; *speaking the truth in love*, Ephes. 4. 15. Endeavouring to heal differences in the most placid gentle manner , without *envyings*, *strifes*, *backbitings*, *whisperings*, 2 Cor. 12. 20. *Doing nothing through strife or vain-glory*, but in *lowliness of mind*, every one esteeming others better than himself, Phil. 2. 3. They that exceed others in knowledge , should exceed them likewise in the study of peace. The best of us do now know but in part , darkly ; that time is to come , when all these differences shall be cleared up, and we shall have a full vision of the true state of things. In the mean space it concerns us to forbear one another in those lesser things about which we differ : And to be very zealous about those great matters in which we agree, namely, *righteousness*, and *peace*, and *joy in the Holy Ghost*.

II. Prop.

II. *There are some things in Religion, wherein if a man faithfully serve Christ, he shall be accepted by him , tho he should mistake and fall short of his duty in other things.*

That

That is, if a man be truly conscientious and sincere in those more substantial duties of *righteousness*, and *peace*, and *joy in the Holy Ghost*, it is not his mistakes or failings in other lesser things that shall make him incapable of the Kingdom of God.

There are several expressions in Scripture, whereby these more essential and necessary parts of Religion are distinguished from those of lesser consequence, *Heb. 13. 9.* They are comprehended under that general name of *Grace*, in opposition to *meats*. 'Tis good that the heart be established with grace, not with meats, *Matth. 23. 23.* They are stiled *the weighty matters of the law* : judgment, mercy, faith love, in opposition to *the titling of mint and cummin*. Very frequently Obedience in opposition to *Sacrifice* : To be washed and cleansed, putting away the evil of our doings, learning to do well, seeking to do judgment, in opposition to *incense, oblations, and new moons, &c.* *Isa. 1. 1.* *Circumcision of the flesh*, outward and according to the letter, and *circumcision of the heart*, inward and according to the Spirit.

I shall mention only one Scripture for proof of the Point: 1 Cor. 3. 11, 12. If a man hold to the foundation *which is Jesus Christ*, though he build upon this foundation *Gold and Silver, precious Stones or wood, hay, stubble*, the fire shall try it, if it be burnt he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved.

By *Gold, Silver and precious stones*, is meant pure and solid Doctrine; by the other, *wood, hay, and stubble*, is signified such vain erroneous Doctrine, as cannot endure the test of fire, the fire of Affliction and Temptation, the fire of the Spirit which searcheth and proveth hidden things, or the fire of the last day, but will be discovered and consumed by them, to the loss of all that pains and cost which men have laid out in such superstructions: But not to the ruine of the Builder, for *he himself shall be saved*.

If I were to give Instances and Examples for the confirmation of this truth, there is no holy man, mere man, that ever was in the world, but may serve as a witness to it. Not to mention the ancient *Patriarchs, Prophets, the Apostles* themselves, who were none of them
without

without their mistakes and failings at some time or other ; it were not difficult to produce a very large Catalogue of errors, out of the Writings of the ancient Fathers : Who tho they were the great Master-builders of their times, and by their holiness, zeal, learning, sufferings, did in their generations exceedingly promote the work of the Gospel ; yet they were not without their *hay and stubble* ; every one of them being obnoxious to errors, and some of them to none of the least : Both *Irenæus* and *Justin Martyr*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, *Origen*, *Hierom*, and *Augustin* more than ever he retracted : But that it would in many respects be inconvenient to uncover their nakedness. And those amongst us in these days , who either really are , or are esteemed to be, the great Luminaries of Religion, they are not greater than the *Fathers* were in their times. Many of the superstructions which they lay out so much care and cost upon, will prove but mere *hay and stubble*, when they come to a trial *by fire*.

I shall but mention these two Reasons of the Point.

1. From the nature of *Man*, to which nothing is more incident than frailty and error. He was a good man that said, *Who can understand his errors?* not only of his practice, but his judgment too. And he, who in another place, *In many things we offend all*. If any one should say he hath no error, That man hath not the truth in him. Now if mens integrity in the more substantial parts of Religion did not secure them, notwithstanding these errors and failings, no man living could be saved.

2. From the nature of Religion, which comprehends under it things of several natures and degrees. There are some things *essential, substantial, fundamental*; other things *circumstantial, accidental*. Religion is compared to a building; it is not a covering of the roof with thatch, or leaving a flaw in the wall, but only a failing or breach in the Foundation, that will cause the fall or ruine of it. Again, 'tis compared to a new life and nature. Now it is not a blackness of the visage, or deformity of the members, nor every hurt or wound of the body, that shall prove mortal, so long as the vital parts remain sound and intire: And on the
other

other side, a hurt in the vitals would prove mortal, though the countenance were never so beautiful. But 'tis a principle this, so very obvious and plain, and without any dispute, that it will be needless to insist any longer upon the confirmation of it.

In the *Application* of this Point I shall insist only upon two *Uses*, of *Examination*, and *Exhortation*.

I. For *Examination*: If it be so that some things are of such absolute necessity to our happiness, it will concern us then to examine and judge our selves by these things. Nothing is more desirable, than for a man to know upon good grounds the truth of his own estate and condition, in respect of his interest in the kingdom of God; and nothing can better discover this, than our *serving of Christ* in *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*.

1. For *Righteousness*; by this I told you before, we are to understand an universal conformity to the moral Law, both first and second Table, with subordination to the grace of faith. Now this, as it concerns the duties of the first Table, is properly called *Holiness*; and as it refers to the second Table, *Justice*

Heb. 12.

14.

Mat. 5. 8.

or *Righteousness*; who even allows himself in a neglect or violation of either of these, whatever he may think of himself, is not *accepted of God*. 1. As for *Holiness*, we are told expressly, that *without it no man shall see the Lord*. And elsewhere 'tis said, *the pure in heart shall see God*. He that doth either generally omit or neglect the duties of God's worship, and hath not an holy awe and dread upon his mind towards matters of Religion, but can deal with sacred things with the same slight and common affection, wherewith he manages other ordinary matters, hath just reason to suspect himself as *coming short of the Kingdom of God*. 2. And so likewise for that other righteousness of the second Table, referring unto *Justice* in our dealings with one another: Tho the having of this be not enough to entitle us to the Kingdom of God, yet the want of it is enough to bar us from it. 'Tis so suitable to the light of nature, so necessary to humane society, that there is not any one kind of failing that doth more scandalize the profession of Religion, or render it less approved amongst men, than offences of this kind, especially such

such as are done upon pretence of Religion.

2. As for *Peace*: Our Saviour tells us, *Matth. 5. 9. The peace-makers shall be called the children of God. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another. Whereas there is envying, and strife, and division amongst you, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* *Joh. 13. 35.*

1 Cor. 3. 3. The Apostle makes it his business, Gal. 5. 19. to set down such marks whereby men may judge of their conditions, both in respect of the fruits of the flesh, and of the spirit. And amongst the fruits of the flesh, he hath no less than seven several expressions to this purpose; Hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, sedition, envyings. And then he subjoyns, ver.

21. They who do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. And in the next verse, when he comes to reckon up the fruits of the spirit, he mentions but nine particulars, and of them there are six that refer to this grace, The fruit of the spirit is love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, against such there is no law. The New Testament is so frequent and so express in this point, that a man of an un-

peaceable contentious spirit must very grossly delude himself to build his confidence upon his zeal in lesser matters, with the neglect of this.

3. And so in the *third* place, for joy in the *Holy Ghost*, that is, a cheerful and sedate temper of mind, under all outward dispensations, though crosses to our particular hopes and desires; as being secure of our interest in him who hath the management of all times and events at his own disposal, and hath engaged himself by promise to order them so, as that they shall prove for the best to those that love him. This is a duty frequently insisted upon in Scripture, and 'tis one main branch of that life of faith, which is proper to believers. And therefore those forward, peevish professors, who are never contented with any estate, but are always complaining, apt to interpret every thing for an injury, and unworthy dealing towards them, have upon this ground just cause to suspect themselves of much impotence, unbelief, pride, want of that lowliness and meekness of spirit, which the Gospel doth require. If upon a strict enquiry we find our selves wilfully,
grossly

grossly negligent in these more substantial things, we have just cause to suspect our conditions.

II. I have but one *Use* more, for *Exhortation*, with which I shall conclude this Point. To quicken and stir us up to lay out our strength and zeal for the promoting of these things both in our selves and others. There cannot be any more effectual motive, as to our selves, than what I have already insisted upon, That nothing else can secure us without these, and that these will secure us without other things.

But besides, these things, in reference to our doing good unto others, will be more effectual than any other abilities whatsoever. They are singular advantages for a man in his dealing with others, to have the gift of wisdom, an ability of discerning spirits, of clearing and opening deep mysterious things, a mighty power of persuading and convincing. But to all these, if a man were able in a case of doubt, and difficulty, to confirm what he preaches by a miracle, one would think, that were a most infallible way of subduing any opposition,

F 4

and

Garbott
Resurrect.
of Christ.

Gal. 1. 8.
2 Theſ. 2. 9.
Revel. 16.
13.

and carrying all before him. And yet all these advantages would signify nothing, without these moral foundations; and a keeping close to these, might in some measure be effectual without miracles. 'Tis a saying of a Reverend *Divine*, That if the Gospel were now to be planted again, all the miracles in the world would not be sufficient to make it take, whilst our morals are no better than they are. A miracle may strike a little wonderment at first, but good morality soaks and sinks to the heart. And therefore it were a most rational thing in a man to mistrust the truth of any Miracle which did tend to the prejudice of things morally good. And the Scripture in several places doth encourage to it. *Deut. 13. 1.* Upon which account it may be asserted, that the suitableness of the Doctrine of the Gospel, unto purest, highest *Morality*, did as much conduce to the spreading of it, as the *Miracles* whereby it was confirmed. And therefore when many of the Pharisees did pretend those wonderful acts of our Saviour to be done by Magical arts, and the help of the Devil, they were presently confuted by

by the holiness of his doctrine ; *These are not the words of him that hath a Devil,* Joh. 10. 21. And what can be said higher in the commendation of any thing, than that it is a test whereby to try even Miracles themselves, and doth in some sense give authority to them ?

And therefore there is very good reason why we should be excited to a great zeal in the promoting *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* 'Tis true, subtle notions and questions are more the fashion of the times, than these moral duties; but they are withal the disease of the times, and Professors now if ever may be said to be *sick of Questions*, as the phrase is, 1 Tim. 6. 4. Whereas these other things were Religion before any of these fashions came into request, and will be so when they are laid aside and vanished; As being founded upon that universal perpetual Law, written in every man's heart, which can never be either augmented, or diminished, or abrogated. *Nec per senatum aut populum solvi hac lege possumus.* No power can dispense with this Law: Nor doth it need any interpreter to explain it. *Non erat alia*
Romæ,

Romæ, alia Athenis, alia nunc, alia posthac, sed & omnes gentes, omni tempore, una lex & sempiterna & immutabilis continebit, saith the Roman Orator. 'Tis the same in all places and in all times; as proceeding from the Supreme Lawgiver, towards whom he that will not yield obedience, must deny his own essence and dependence; as he goes on very sublimely and elegant- upon that subject.

I know many other things are necessary, as to our religious state, besides these *moral* Duties. But yet these are the primary foundations. And nothing else will be effectual without these.

The End of the second Sermon.

The

The Third Sermon.

R O M. XIV. 17, 18.

For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of Men.

III. **T**HE true reason why Christians of several persuasions stand less approved towards one another, is for want of a right proportioning their zeal about matters of Religion, and because they lay out more of their strength in these lesser things, than on those of greater consequence. Prop. III.

There is no reason to expect that the minds of men should ever be united
to

to a mutual liking and approving of one another, till they can come to be more truly zealous, and more heartily concerned for those *substantial* matters of *righteousness*, and *peace*, and *joy in the Holy Ghost*, than for those *circumstantials* of *meats* and *drinks*.

If we consult the state of the Primitive times, as 'tis represented in the *Acts* of the Apostles, and the *Epistles*, we shall find that this was the occasion both of raising and keeping up the differences amongst the Christians then; *namely*, the insisting more upon forms and parties, meats and days, some being for *Paul*, others for *Apollos*, others for *Cephas*, than upon the substance of duties. And the same likewise might be made evident from abundant testimony out of Ecclesiastical Writers, concerning the following Ages. And what hath been the state of things in our own times, is sufficiently obvious to any easy observation.

There are two heads of Reasons or Argument, that I shall mention for proof of the Point.

1. From the nature and usual consequences of that zeal whereby men are engaged to these lesser things.

2. From

2. From the nature and necessary fruits of mens being devoted to the more substantial things of Religion.

1. Zeal about these lesser matters is not only consistent with strifes and divisions, but is many times the very occasion and fewel whereby they are begotten and continued amongst men.

What the *Apostle* saith concerning those *questions* which he calls *foolish and unlearned*, is in some proportion true 2 Tim. 2.
23.
Titus 3. 9.

concerning such other disputes as are managed with greater vehemence than they ought; that from hence cometh *envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,*

1 Tim. 6. 4. Let a man but look indifferently round about him, amongst all the kinds of Parties in our times, even those whom in his own judgment he esteems the best, and then say, whether, both our common peace and the power of Religion hath not suffered exceedingly upon this account. When men have once given up themselves to controversies of this nature, tho they should perhaps be on the right side, yet these consequences do ordinarily follow upon it.

1. Such

The Third Sermon,

1. Such men are narrowed in their judgments, liable to strong prejudices upon very weak grounds.

2. Sowerd in their spirits, becoming more censorious and rugged in their dispositions.

3. Vitiated in their morals, declining in the duties of moral honesty, neglecting the ties of Relations, friendship, gratitude, and such other things, as should secure and sweeten humane society.

4. Cooled in their zeal and fervor towards the more substantial parts of Religion, whilst they are wholly taken up with the prosecution of lesser matters. That man hath conversed but a little in the world, or at least made but slender observation, who hath not in these times met with abundance of examples to this purpose.

II. The *second* Reason is from the nature of these more weighty and substantial matters of Religion, whose property it is to unite the minds of men, and heal their differences. There is a *twofold* notion under which the strifes and contentions amongst men may be considered, either as their *Sin* or *Judgment*.

Now

Now this laying out our selves upon the more substantial matters of Religion, will free a man from contention in both these respects.

1. As'tis a *Sin*: by freeing us from, and strengthening us against many of those temptations to this sin that others are exposed unto. He that makes it his principal care to deal righteously in his conversation with others, will be sure thereby to minister less occasion of raising strife, and hath the advantage of avoiding and composing those heats that others would raise against him. If a man design this as his great business, to *follow the things that make for peace*, he will not be apt to be immersed in Parties, or transported with particular Interests, or misled by the affectation of singularity; but he will be always ready to put the best construction upon things, to pity the infirmities, and forgive the injuries of others. He that is able to rejoyce in an afflicted condition, is thereby in a good measure freed from those temptations of hopes and fears whereby others are engaged; and consequently will be less concerned in the designs of men, or the issue of things: Such

The Third Sermon,

and one knows how to be content with his present state, and to be patient under sufferings; and if he should not prevail for those things which others will needs contend with him about, yet he can be happy without them. In brief, Religion doth mortify those inward lusts which are the first principles of contentions and divisions without us. It makes a man meek and lowly, *blameless and harmless*; teaches him not to *revenge himself*, but to *overcome evil with good*; to *speak evil of no man*; to be *no brawler*, not to *strive*, but to be gentle and humble, *shewing all meekness to all men*.

2. Sometimes contentions and divisions are inflicted as a *judgment*, when the Lord is pleased to mix a perverse spirit amongst men, filling them with confusion and disorder, making them dash one against another, till they are broken to pieces. Now this minding the *main* things of Religion, doth likewise conduce to the freeing of us from this. The *Text* tells us these things make us *acceptable to God*: *εὐαρέσκεις* Prov. 16. 7. *When a man's ways please the Lord, he will make his enemies to be at peace with him*. As God doth sometimes

times punish disobedience, by making a man's friends to become his enemies; so is he pleased to reward obedience by making a man's enemies to become his friends. *He hath the hearts of all men in his hands*, and can bend them as he pleaseth; and he hath by promise engaged himself, either so to change their affections, that they shall be friends to us, or at least so to restrain their hostility that they shall not hurt us, 1 Pet. 3. 13. *Who is he that will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?* If a man be truly religious and holy, and give himself up to such courses, as are even to the light of nature unquestionably good, it cannot be but that he must hereby acquire a reverence and esteem even in the hearts of wicked men.

I know there is an Objection against this, which is obvious to every one, to which something must be said by way of answer. Did not our *Saviour* tell his disciples, that they should be *hated of all men for his sake?* Matth. 10. 22. And doth not *David* complain of some that were enemies to him, for this very reason, *because he was a follower of that which was good?* Psal. 38. 20. All
 G that

that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution, 2 Tim 3. 12. Because ye are not of the world therefore doth the world hate you, Joh. 15. 19. with several other Scriptures; besides the constant experience of all Ages to the same purpose.

To this it may be answered, That 'tis true, there is in Nature, a necessary unavoidable enmity betwixt light and darkness, good and evil, *the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent.* And 'tis not the meaning of these promises to abolish or reconcile that enmity or opposition which is founded in the nature of things, but only to suspend the Acts of it. The more righteous any man is, by so much the greater opposition must there be betwixt him and sinners. But yet he is hereby after a more especial manner intitled to God's protection, to preserve him from any real hurt, or damage by them. And they are for the most part, the imperfections and failings of good men, that do expose them to sufferings of this nature. And then besides, though some men have such a *superfluity of maliciousness*, as the phrase is *Jam. 1. 21.* being hardned against the

the common principles of morality, as to express a hatred and enmity against others for their goodness; yet it is not so with all, nor perhaps with any at all times. But the worst of men, must in their secret judgments and most retired thoughts, bear an inward reverence towards those that are good. As there is in vice a natural deformity, whereby it doth appear odious, even to the consciences of those who are guilty of it; so is there a beauty in holiness and virtue, whereby it appears lovely even to those mens hearts, whose mouths are apt to reproach it. It cannot be but that some men will be apt to speak against us for well-doing. And yet *well-doing* is the best way to *put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*, 1 Pet. 2. 15. Or if it do not wholly silence them, but that they will be speaking *against us as evil-doers*, yet 'tis not without some secret shame and guilt of being false accusers, 1 Pet. 3. 16.

And so much may serve for the *proof* of the Point. I come now to the *Application* of it: Wherein it may serve for these two *Uses*, *Instruction* and *Exhortation*.

I. *Information*: If it be so, that the minding of the main things of Religion, more than lesser differences, be that which must render us *acceptable to God, and approved of men*, then these things will follow.

1. We have reason to suspect that our ways upon this account may not be acceptable unto God, when we find that we do not stand approved to men, especially to good men.

2. 'Tis a preposterous course to seek the approbation of men by any such way, as will render us unacceptable to God; these two being linked together, both in their own natures, and by particular promises. 'Tis true, a man may get into the favour of a Party, by appearing vehement and zealous in some particular contest, but this will render him less approved to other good men, less useful in his generation, and consequently less acceptable to God.

3. 'Tis a vain thing to expect any peace and settlement amongst men, till they come to be more concerned for those great things of Religion, than for others of lesser moment. There may be a change of Forms and Parties,
and

and the external state of things, but their minds will still abide at the same distance, till they come to be united in these great things of *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*. 'Tis not the pouring of a liquor from one vessel to another that takes off its sourness and acrimony, without such a mixture as may enter into it, and alter the nature of it. If men would make this to be their great design and business, to strive who should be most righteous, and peaceable, and patient, other contentions amongst them would quickly vanish.

4. A man may insist so much in the vindication of some truths and duties, as thereby to bring a prejudice upon Religion. He may do the Devils work by his endeavours to promote such things as are in themselves right and true. I mean such contests as concern points of the same or the like nature with those of *meats and drinks* in the Text.

But what then may some say, should we be of no opinion in such things? Must we all turn *Scepticks*, and be indifferent to every thing, as if there could be no certainty?

I answer, By no means, nothing less; every man should endeavour to have a full persuasion in his own mind concerning the things in difference; And when he doth well understand them, he should be ready to assert and maintain them, as occasion may be offered, and so far as the nature of the things will bear.

Only herein lies the great difficulty, which will require much Christian prudence and consideration to the stating of it, namely, how to proportion our zeal aright, in reference to several truths, which I shall particularly speak to in the next *Use*.

II. *Use of Exhortation.*

I. To be cautious and considerate in the right managing of our differences about these lesser things. There was never any Age, wherein contests of this nature have not been in fashion; tho perhaps never so much as in ours. And therefore it will the more concern us to regulate our prosecutions and demeanour about them. In order to which these *two* things are to be well weighed and considered, namely, the *Evidence* and *Importance* of the things in question.

1. For

1. For their *Evidence*: Every truth, whether *natural* or *revealed*, is not alike evident; some are more obscure and doubtful than others. And because the evidence of things is the ground and formal reason of our assent to them, therefore 'tis our duty to proportion the degrees of our assent, to those of our evidence. Not to be doubtful in things that are clear, not to be confident in things that are doubtful; but with an equal disposition of mind, to submit to every thing according to its clearness and perspicuity: In opposition to this there are *two* extreams, which are exceedingly prejudicial to Religion (especially in times when controversies and disputes about it do so much abound) namely, *Scepticalness*, and *Dogmaticalness*.

1. By *Scepticalness*, I mean, a willingness and inclination of mind, rather to comply with doubts and objections, than with proofs and evidences; an aptness to pick quarrels with every thing, though never so manifest, as if we were not willing that any thing should be certain and established. Besides the insolence and pride which is the ground of this disposition, there

is likewise much of folly and contradiction in it, whereby such men do become obnoxious unto that other extrem of *Dogmaticalness*, which they affect most to avoid. For to look upon every thing as doubtful, is to deny the clear evidence of some things; and 'tis as well *dogmaticalness* to deny clear evidence where it is, as to assert it where it is not.

2 By *Dogmaticalness*, I mean, a readiness to be over confident of the things we are well inclined to; an aptness to own every thing for equally true and certain, which is professed by that Company or Party of men, amongst whom our names are listed; when a man receives a whole *System* of doctrine by the bulk, as if every thing in it were undoubtedly true, and alike evident, without a particular enquiry into the grounds and reasons of things. An unwillingness to listen unto any objection, which may seem to make against them, or to shake their certainty. This is a blameable partiality on the other hand; and hath in it the like inconsistency and contradiction with the other extrem. Such Persons hereby

hereby exposing the most clear and manifest truths to the suspicion of error, by putting more obscure and doubtful matters in the same rank with them.

2. The *Second* thing to be considered, is the *Importance* of the matters in question. As every truth is not of the same evidence, so neither is it of the same necessity. But there are in this respect likewise several degrees amongst them: Some things are essential to Religion, belonging to the foundation, and are therefore necessary to the very being of a Christian. As *Righteousness* in the Text, that is, *faith*, and *holiness*, and *justice*, or as it is elsewhere expressed, *faith which worketh by love*: Other things are only superstructions, and belong only to the well being of a Christian, amongst which some are as *gold*, and *silver*, and *precious stones*, things of the greatest value amongst men, next to life and being; others are of a lighter consequence, and more remote from the foundation. Now herein much Christian prudence will be required to distinguish aright, concerning the importance of several truths and duties, and accordingly to pro-

proportion our zeal for them, and our contention about them.

Not by our remissness to bring down *foundation* Truths to the same rate with *superstrunctions*; nor by our forwardness on the other hand, to raise up *superstrunctions* unto the same value with *fundamentals*; which are the two extremes referring to the importance of the things, by which truth it self will be very much prejudiced.

1. Too great carelesness and coldness about necessary truths, a kind of indifferency about all matters of Religion, as if they were all alike, and did so far only oblige, as the Civil Laws of several Countries did inforce them. I cannot say of this extreme, that it doth encrease Controversies in Religion; but it doth that which is much worse, it takes away the subject of the question, I mean Religion it self.

2. On the other side, a man may lay too great a weight on some things, which are truths and duties. And there is nothing more ordinary than for good men, when they are once well persuaded of some particular opinion, to think they do God good service,

vice, by prosecuting it with their utmost zeal, or by laying greater weight upon it than the nature of the thing requires, or will admit. But this must needs be of very dangerous consequence: For if this course be admitted, where shall it end? Why may not falshood be obtruded upon us on the same account? If we once transgress those bounds which are fixed by the nature of things in respect of their evidence and importance, there can be no security against the wildest errors in the world.

These *two* things that I have mentioned, being soberly considered and impartially applied to some of our late and present controversies, would very much conduce to healing of the minds of men, and taking them off from many of those contentions and animosities which now abound.

2. We should hence be persuaded to lay out our selves with our utmost zeal and intention of mind upon those great things of *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*. It were easy to mention abundance of Arguments, to excite and quicken men to a fervency about these things, would the
time

time permit it. I shall very briefly sum up what remains under these two heads, the *Excellency* and *Seasonableness* of these things.

I. From their *Excellency* : There are but two kind of things that any men aim at or endeavour after, to get into the favour of *Men*, and of *God*, to be safe here, and happy hereafter. Why now these things do intitle us to both, they make us *to be accepted of God, and approved of men*. They are not only duties, but privileges, the chief part of that salvation and glory which we are capable of on this side of Heaven. That which makes men zealous in other points, is their apprehension of the importance and clearness of the things they insist upon : Why, there can be nothing of greater importance than these things, wherein the power and substance of Religion doth consist. And as for their evidence, let it be supposed that in some of the controversies now on foot amongst us, there should in some solemn Assembly be an appeal made to heaven, to determine which of the Parties were in the right : If upon such an appeal, an Angel should immediately be sent down,
or

or men should rise from the dead, and declare that such a Way and Party were in the right, and the others mistaken; one would think that upon such an advantage, men might have good ground to be zealous and confident. Why we have more reason to be zealous for *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*, than men would have upon such a miraculous confirmation of their Opinions: Because these things are of the highest importance, and we have for them the same, if not better evidence. And the reason is this: By the same natural light which convinces a man that God alone is Omnipotent, and can only do miracles; that he is infinitely good, and will not perform any miracle in confirmation of a sin or an error: By the same light it is that we are convinced of moral duties. But now we cannot have the like degree of evidence, that this or that particular action is a miracle, (because of the obscurity of natural causes) as we may that holiness, and righteousness, and peaceableness, are duties, and of a natural goodness and obligation. We are in the frame of our natures better fitted and pre-

prepared to understand *morals*,, than *naturals*; what is honest, rather than what is possible; and 'tis great reason we should be so, because we are more concerned in the one than the other. So that 'tis not possible there should be any better evidence than what we have for the goodness and obligation of these things.

2. From the *Seasonableness* of these things, both in respect of, 1. What we have seen in the Times *lately past*. And 2. What we are in expectation of for the *future*.

1. For the *time past*: No man can be ignorant of those horrid scandals that have been brought upon Religion by the neglect of these moral duties, under the highest pretences of zeal to other matters. Whereby some men have been induced to despise all profession of Religion, as being but mere pretence and design, as if there were nothing in it of reality. Now if we have in us any tenderness for the honour of Religion, if we would make up that breach, and wipe off that blemish that hath in this respect been brought upon it, it must be by our integrity and zeal for the promoting of these
more

more substantial matters, both in our selves and others. 'Tis true men have been always apt to rest themselves in moral performances, as if they alone were sufficient to entitle us to heaven; and consequently as the endeavour to drive them off from such presumptions as these, can never be unreasonable, so on the other hand when men shall out of pretence to some higher notions and attainments, dare to neglect and violate these moral duties, 'tis then, if ever, seasonable to insist upon the necessity and importance of them.

2. In reference to that settlement and peace which we are now in expectation of, to which these things will most effectually conduce. It must be granted, that 'tis beyond humane contrivance to find out any infallible way of securing future events; nor is it consistent with the nature of humane affairs, which are often swayed by such intricate providences, as we are not able to foresee or comprehend the reason of; God sometimes making use of such men, who are most vehement against a thing, to be the chief instruments of promoting it; and those
who

who are most for it, to be the occasions of hindering it.

So that I say, in this respect there is a necessity that we should acquiesce in such fair probabilities, as the prudence of men can contrive, and the state of things will admit. He that hath observed those various providences, which these poor distracted Nations have of late years been exercised with, cannot but take notice, that since our first civil Tempests and Storms, there have been some seasons wherein we have seemed to be near the Harbour, and upon the borders of settlement: And yet in the midst of all our hopes, there hath still been some unexpected emergency, whereby we have been driven back again into the wide Ocean, and exposed to all our former fears and dangers. What may be the issue of our present expectations, no man can be certain of. Only of this we may be most sure, that this laying out our selves upon the duties of *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost*, will be the best security for every man in his private capacity, and the most effectual remedy for the publick.

It cannot be but that in times of
change

change and revolution, mens minds must be variously exercised with hopes and fears, according as their several interests do engage them. The *great thoughts of heart* upon some men are, how they may be secured in the change of times: But now if men would repose themselves upon Scripture-security, I would refer them to that place, *Rom. 13. 3. Wilt thou not then be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.* This being the very natural end of Magistracy, *namely, the praise of them that do well, 1 Pet. 2. 14.*

I shall shut up all with that saying of the *Apostle, 1 Pet. 3. 10. cited out of the 34 Psal. What man is he that would see good days? Let him eschew evil and do good, let him seek peace and ensue it.* He may be most certain by this means to be entit'led unto the *protection of God: For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: And safety from men; For who is he that will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?*

The End of the Third Sermon.

H

The

The Fourth Sermon.

TITUS II. 10.

*That they may adorn t d octrine of
God our Saviour in all things.*

ST. Paul having by his Preaching laid the foundation of a *Christian* Church in *Crete*, or *Candia*, and not having leisure to reside amongst them, for the farther building them up in their most holy faith, by reason of his employment in several other places, to the care of which (as being the *Apostle* of the *Gentiles*) he was engaged, he doth depute *Titus* in his stead.

And for his better encouragement and direction in those ministerial employments committed to him, he writes to him this *Epistle*, consisting (besides the *preface* and *conclusion*) of so

H 2

many

many parts as there are *Chapters*, which are three.

Vers. 5.

The first being concerning the *ordaining of Elders or Bishops*, with some animadversions against such as did trouble the peace of the Church.

The *second* concerning those *particular duties* that belong to the several orders and degrees of persons in a *Family*.

The *third* concerning the *common duties of Christians* in general.

The Text is under the *Second* of these Heads, wherein *Titus* is instructed in that sound doctrine (as 'tis stiled, *v. 1.*) whereunto he was to exhort several Ages, Sexes and Orders of persons in an *economical* relation.

Aged men have their lesson, *v. 2.*

Aged Women, *v. 3.* *Young Women*, *v. 4, 5.*

Young men, and more particularly *Titus* himself, as being under that rank, *v. 6, 7, 8.* *Servants*, *v. 9, 10.*

All which Exhortations are enforced by several reasons from the *11 v.* to the end of the *Chapter*.

That which *Servants* are exhorted to, is a *submissive gentleness and fidelity*; to be *obedient unto their own Masters*,

to please them well in all things, not answering again, not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity: Which exhortation is further pressed upon them by a particular reason, taken from that common duty incumbent upon all believers, to bring a reputation upon the Religion which they did profess, in the words of the *Text*, *That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.*

That's the connexion and scope of the *Text*. There are four *Terms* which may seem to need explication. What is meant by, *They adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.*

I. The *Subjects* of this exhortation, in the word *they*, that is, *Servants*, v. 9. By which word is not only meant such kind of *Servants* as are now in use amongst us, *Conductitii*, *hired Servants*, who in other respects are *Freemen*, and can let themselves out to service upon such kind of conditions, and for such a time as they shall agree upon: But it comprehends likewise *Mancipia*, *Slaves*, such as are bought and sold in the Market, and reckoned amongst mens goods and chattels. For such were many of the *Servants* in the Pri-

mitive times. Now because those that are in a servile condition are naturally of a more illiberal, rugged and disingenuous temper, the *Apostle* would have such Servants as are converted, to manifest a change upon themselves in this respect, becoming more mild and gentle in their carriage, whereby they should remove that prejudice and scandal that was brought upon Religion by others: As if the privilege of their being made free by Christ, and having him for their Master, might authorize them to be more stubborn and insolent towards their civil relations, and not to remain any longer under the yoke of humane servitude. It would bring a reputation upon the doctrine of the Gospel which they professed, when others should by experience find it so powerful upon them, as to render those who are in the hardest condition of servitude, patient and submissive under their yoke, trusty and faithful in their duties.

2. The next *term* to be enquired after is the *Act, Adorn*. The word is *κοσμεῖν*, it signifies to set a thing off for its best advantage of comeliness, that it may appear grateful and lovely

to the beholders. It consists in two things, removal of blemishes, and addition of ornaments: Many things that are of an excellent beauty in their own native simplicities, may yet be capable of such supperadditions as will contribute to their further ornament. Now men may then be said to adorn their profession, when they do studiously endeavour to avoid all such uncomely actions, as may bring a prejudice upon it, and to do such things as may make it appear most amiable, and win over others to a love of it.

3. *The Object matter*, in that phrase, *The doctrine of God our Saviour*; whereby we are to understand the Gospel; which is therefore said to be the doctrine of Christ, because he is the chief Author and Object of it. It being the word of reconciliation by him. Now tho it be not in the power of any creature to add any thing unto the beauty of this doctrine, which is in it self *the wisdom of God in a mystery*, 2 Cor. 2. 7. *The glorious Gospel*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. *And the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*, v. 6. *The riches of the glory of*

God, Colos. 1. 27. Which are some of the highest expressions of beauty that words can reach unto: And so this doctrine is not in it self capable of any real addition of beauty from us, no more than we can add light to the Sun; yet God is pleased to esteem and to accept of that as an ornament to it, when our *conversation is as becometh the Gospel of Christ*, as the phrase is *Philip. 1. 27*. When men walk suitably to those rules of goodness, and purity, and meekness, which are therein so often insisted upon.

4. As for that phrase, *All things*, it does refer not only to those duties of Religion and Worship which do more immediately concern our communion with himself; but likewise to the businesses of our conversing with others, to our managing of secular and worldly business; our very recreations and diversions should not be without a favour of Christianity. And we should, even in these things, give evidence of our faith, sobriety, and patience, and humility, and contentedness. And so likewise for the duties of our relations, even the meanest of them: That of Servants, who tho they be

be themselves of the basest and most contemptible condition, yet are in a capacity, according to their sphere, of bringing honour to their profession, as well as those that are most noble.

So much I conceive sufficient for the explication of the words in the Text. Though the duty here mentioned do by its particular connexion in this place more immediately refer to those that are in the relation of Servants, yet it is supposed to be of a more general extent, and to reach unto all other degrees and professions, for whom the reasons of it will hold *à fortiori*. For if those of the meanest condition are not exempted from this endeavour, much more then should others make it their care and business, who have greater advantages for it, and consequently greater engagements to it. And according to this more general extent of this duty, I intend the prosecution of it.

The *Doctrine* I would insist upon, is this :

It is the duty of every Christian so to demean himself in every business, condition,

dition, relation, as may adorn the Gospel, and win over others to a love of it.

There is a special care to be had to the comeliness of our actions, that they be such, and so managed, as to bring a reputation to the doctrine we profess, and make it seem lovely in the eyes of others.

I might cite abundance of proofs to this purpose. All those admonitions in Scripture, 1. Of not giving offence to others. But 2. Rather winning them over by our good examples, are but other kind of expressions signifying the same thing with this in the *Text*.

Such are those places which do prohibit the giving an occasion for the name of God and his doctrine to be blasphemed, Rom. 2. 24. 1 Tim. 6. 1. Or causing the way of truth to be evil spoken of, 2 Pet. 2. 2. Or giving occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully, 1 Tim. 5. 14. Signifying that special care and caution which we ought to use in vindicating the reputation of Religion. Men are full of prejudice against the ways of God, apt to entertain hard thoughts against them, as
if

if they were rough, deformed, and uneven, ready to catch at all occasions of confirming themselves in these prejudices, from the haltings and imprudences of those that profess Religion: And therefore it should be their endeavour to be very wary of giving any advantages of this kind. This was *Nehemiah's* argument, c. 5. v. 9. *Ought ye not to walk in the fear of God, because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?* And in this very Chapter of the *Text*, the *Apostle* exhorteth that their *behaviour be as becometh holiness*, v. 3. *that the word of God be not blasphemed*, v. 5. *that he who is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you*, v. 8. So again, 1 Pet. 2. 12. *For this reason ought your conversation to be honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they are apt to speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works which they shall behold, be brought to glorify God in the day of visitation.* 1 Pet. 3. 16.

To this purpose likewise are all those other Scriptures, which do mention it as a duty to win over others by our good examples. *To let our light so shine* Mat. 5. 16. *before men, that others seeing our good works may glorify our Father which is in heaven;*

Heb. 10.
24.

Rom. 11.
14.

heaven ; To consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works, that is, so far to study the tempers, inclinations, interests, of those we converse with, that thereby we may be able to take the right advantage of doing good upon them. *If by any means we may provoke them to an honest emulation.* So *Philip. 2. 15.* That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, amongst whom ye may shine as lights in the world : That you may be of as great usefulness and ornament in your several Spheres, as the lights in the firmament.

So Womens conversations ought to be such, as to win their Husbands, &c. *1 Pet. 3. 1, 2.*

I shall cite but one Text more for the proof of this, and then proceed to the Reasons of it. 'Tis that known place, *Philip. 4. 8.* Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of these things. Wherein the Apostle doth by
a pecu-

a peculiar strain of *Rhetorick* inculcate upon the *Philippians*, in the most comprehensive words, and the most serious vehement manner, all such lovely and desirable qualifications, as might serve to adorn their professions.

Whatsoever things are true : That is, sincere and real, free from all false pretences and appearances.

Whatsoever things are honest : The original word is *σεμνὰ*, which signifies properly *venerable*. That is, such things as may occasion in others a reverend esteem of you.

Whatsoever things are just : That is, free from the suspicion of unworthy partiality, or base ends, not so much aiming at serving the interest of a Party, as doing that which is in it self right and just.

Whatsoever things are pure : *ἅπα ἀγνὰ*, That is, things that are free from all immodest uncomeliness.

Whatsoever things are lovely : *ἅπα προσφιλῆ*, That is, grateful and benign, such as will render a man most acceptable to those with whom he converses; free from that asperity and ruggedness, which do's so deform some mens carriage.

What-

The Fourth Sermon,

Whatsoever things are of good report :
 ὅσα ἁφρη. There are some things
 that by the consent of Nations are of
 a good fame, and well reputed of; the
 Apostle would have a special care taken
 of such matters, there being nothing
 of greater consequence to the interest
 of a Profession, than the good name
 of those that profess it.

If there be any virtue, ἀρετὴ. Which
 Word tho it be most frequent amongst
 the Philosophers, yet 'tis very seldom
 used in Scripture, and not any where
 by *St. Paul*, excepting this place, as
 being perhaps too low an expression
 for those spiritual Graces which
 Christians ought chiefly to labour after.
 But yet as for all those things that are
 commendable amongst the very Hea-
 then, which they stile by the name of
Virtue, Christians ought not to be
 defective in such things, or think
 it below them to imitate such ex-
 amples.

If there be any praise ; whatsoever is
 counted laudable and comely by the
 very light of nature, ought not to be
 neglected by them.

For

For the further confirmation of this Truth, I shall suggest three *Reasons* to convince the equity of it.

1. This doctrine doth adorn us, and therefore 'tis but reason that we should adorn it. We are all of us naturally in a deformed forlorn condition, being *wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*; and 'tis alone this Doctrine of the Gospel that doth furnish us with *gold, and eye-salve, and white rayment* to enrich and beautify us. We are of our selves *children of darkness*, 'tis the Gospel that doth *beget us again to a lively hope*, and make us *children of the light*; and therefore 'tis but reason that we should *walk worthy of our vocation, and as becomes children of the light*, Ephes. 5. 8. *Setting forth the virtues of him that called us into his marvelous light*, 1 Pet. 2. 9. Light is one of the most glorious and beautiful creatures in the world, and therefore an earthly and sordid carriage will not become that title. Those that are raised to this privilege should endeavour after such virtues as will be suitable to it. Men are content in the night-time to be homely and plain, but in the day they will endeavour to have

have their garments decent and comely about them. So should Christians demean themselves, remembering the obligation that lies upon them from their calling, counting it a greater shame to them to do any unworthy act, under the glorious light of the Gospel about them, and the illumination of the spirit within them, than other men do to commit any filthiness in the face of the Sun. Men usually are very careful to advance the honour and reputation of that from which they receive their own. So that the Law of gratitude doth ingage us to this duty, which is the first reason.

Reason 2.

2. In the adorning of our professions, we do really promote our own advantage, and adorn our selves, the reputation of that redounding to our benefit, and the blemishes of it to our disparagement. The honour and esteem that is given to any Profession does reflect upon the Professors; men are usually very sensible in things of their own interest; how careful will they be in adorning their Habitations, not grudging to bestow much labour and cost to this purpose, and for their Bodies nothing more common than vanities

vanities and excess in the adorning of these; and yet after all their care and delicacy in this kind, these bodies of theirs are but frail earthly Tabernacles, and must shortly prove worms-meat, and molder away into their original dust: And so likewise for their Names; all those difficulties that men undergo in the pursuit of fame and glory, which is the business of men of more large and generous spirits, is but for the adorning of their names, and perpetuating them to posterity, which tho it have its proper use and bounds, yet is it but vanity, as *Solomon* says, *seeing that which now is, in the days to come shall be forgotten, Eccles. 2. 16.* Every generation producing something which seems new and strange, to take up mens talk and wonder, and to drown the memory of former persons and actions.

Now if we would do any thing of this kind which may be for our real advantage, it must be by the adorning of this Doctrine, which abideth for ever. The sweet ornament of a good name which we endeavour to pour upon the head of that, will run down and be communicated to the skirts

I

about

about it, all that belong unto it. There are but two kind of things that may justly challenge any care from us of this nature; some things ought to be adorned for their own worth and dignity, other things for that special affection we bear to them, and the desire of having them loved and esteemed by others; in both which respects, this doctrine of the Gospel ought to be preferred before any thing else, especially since our own advantage is so much concerned in it. That is a second Reason, the Law of self-love doth engage it.

Reason 3.

3. And *lastly*, which may serve instead of all other Reasons, this is the great end of our Creation and Being, the chief business upon which we were sent into the world, to glorify God, and bring honour to his name: Which we then do in reference to others, when we demean our selves so as to cause them to acknowledge and speak well of him. This is *to walk worthy of the Lord*, 1 Thes. 2. 12. and *as becometh the Gospel of Christ*, Philip. 1. 27. When those that of themselves are apt *to speak evil* of our Profession, *shall by our good conversation* be

be convinced and won over to a love of it. This is the greatest and most noble work that any man is capable of contributing unto; And therefore that may be another Reason to enforce the necessity of it, 'tis the chief end of our Creation.

I shall need to say no more by way of *Explication* or *Proof*: I come now to the *Application* of this Point, wherein it may be improved to these *Uses*.

I. For *Information*, if it be every ones duty to take special care of adorning his profession, then it will follow:

1. That men are not only to regard the lawfulness of their actions as to the matter, but the comeliness of them too as to the manner and degree. As there is difference betwixt clothing and ornaments, so is there betwixt the mere lawfulness of actions, and the comeliness of them. A Christian should even in moral duties do something beyond the common level of men, aiming at things that are more generous and heroical, and may give a lustre to his profession; especially in such matters, as border nearest to the

proper Graces of Christianity, as *gratitude, patience, meekness, self-denial*. And in such cases where other ordinary men may be supposed to yield unto common infirmity and temptation, the usual excuse of their failings; he should press on with greater vigor, as considering the cause that depends upon him, the reputation of his holy Profession. Some things, that for the substance of them may be just; yet being performed without respect to this end, may prove blame-worthy. *Bonum* must be *ex causa integra*: The defect of any such circumstance whereby an action might be better performed, doth lay a blemish upon it. Now we are *to provide things honest in the sight of all men*; to acquit and commend *our selves not only to our own consciences*, but to *other mens* consciences too, 2 Cor. 4. 2. This doth principally consist in the right circumstantiating of actions, and will require much prudence to judge what is seasonable and fit.

2. Hence it will follow, that amongst that great variety of duties, which are incumbent upon a Christian, there ought to be a special regard unto such as are of general approbation, and
most

most futable to the reason of mankind : that is , to those moral duties which the light of Nature doth oblige unto, because *those who are without* , will be apt to take an estimate of us by our conformity to these. And that man will never arrive to the esteem of being Religious, who should be found negligent and defective in this kind , either in respect of an holy awe and fear towards the divine Majesty, which he doth profess to adore ; justice, equity, charity, gentleness in his dealing and conversing with others ; these things being of an universal approbation amongst men that pretend to any Religion. For tho natural men are apt to entertain prejudices and hard thoughts against many religious duties, yet there are some things that are both *acceptable of God* , and *approved of men*, Rom. 14. 18. And that is, when Religion is not so much put in *meats and drinks*, and external forms, as in *righteousness and peace*, &c. 'Tis true indeed, a man must take heed of resting in these moral attainments ; but on the other side he must take heed of coming short of them too. He that pretends to grace, and doth not come

up to these, is in as bad, and (in many respects) a much worse condition, than he that rests in them. 'Tis true likewise, that there may be much danger in seeking to please men, but yet this is an end which we may and should propose to our selves even in our religious conversation, *Rom. 15. 2. Let every one please his neighbour: 'tis the Apostles advice there; and he owns it for his practice, 2 Cor. 10. 33. Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.* There must and will always be an enmity betwixt the seed of the Woman and the seed of the Serpent; but yet this doth not hinder but that we may labour for so much favour in their eyes as may give us advantage of doing good upon them. 'Tis said of the *Apostles*, that they *had favour with all the people, Act. 2. 47.* And upon that account were they so powerful amongst them. Some of these things would not perhaps be so proper to be insisted on, did not the condition of the times make them seasonable; when so many men under the profession of Religion (which is now in fashion, and therefore easy) do

do indulge themselves in the neglect of moral duties. As if the pretences to holiness, which do really so much the more engage to these things, might yet serve as a dispensation from them; than which nothing can be more uncomely.

2. But I hasten to a second *Use*, for *Reproof* of such persons who are so far from being Ornaments, that they are rather spots and blemishes to the Doctrine of the Gospel. Such are of two kinds, *Careless* and *Scandalous* Professors.

I. For those that are *Careless* and Barren, who are wholly immersed in themselves, and the observance of their own humours, without any regard to the profiting or pleasing of others. There is something in mens religious conversation, answerable to the slovenliness of their outward carriage, whereby others are made averse, and as it were nauseated from conversing with them. Such are all selfish, morose, churlish, contentious men, who instead of inviting others, do rather discourage them from the ways of Religion.

II. For such as are *scandalous*, who whilst they profess Religion, do allow themselves in some notorious sins; And sometimes commit them under the very pretence of Religion; as the Pharisees are accused to *devour widows houses*, that is, to do acts of injustice and cruelty, under the pretence of devotion and zeal: Both these are an abomination, but especially the latter, which doth involve in it the highest affront and indignity against Religion, that can be. It is really to scoff and despise that, to which in appearance we pretend the highest reverence. It is to carry Christ about in scorn, to be derided by others, crying *hail King of the Jews*, and yet *spitting upon him, and buffeting him*. Such persons are so far from adorning their profession, that they do their utmost to disparage it, and make it appear odious. What serious man would be invited to own that for a Religion, which is professed by men of such false and hateful conversations? There are *two* things I would briefly suggest by way of motive to dissuade men from offending in either of these kinds, *viz.* the *unworthiness*, and the *Danger* of such carriage.

1. 'Tis

1. 'Tis *Unworthy* and odious to cast a blemish and reproach upon that to which we owe our own honour; to destroy those whom we are bound to love and help. The Scripture puts it as a brand upon the loose Sons of *Eli*, *Hophni* and *Phinehas*, 1 Sam. 2. 17. That *they caused men to abhor the offerings of the Lord*. And nothing can be more hateful than to bring sacred things into contempt: It was *Jacob's* complaint against his Sons, *Simeon* and *Levi*, Gen. 34. 30. That *they had made him to stink amongst the inhabitants of the Land*. So doth the unworthy carriage of Professors, cause the hearts of others to rise up against them with much scorn and detestation.

2. And as it is unworthy, so likewise is it *dangerous*; you know the several *Woes* in Scripture denounced and executed against those that give offence. *Temporal* judgments upon their names, *Malach.* 2. 9. The Priests that caused others to stumble at the Law, are threatened to be made contemptible and base before all the people. And there is nothing more equal, than that those who expose Religion to contempt, should suffer under it themselves.

Judg.

Judgments in respect of life: *Balaam* was for this reason slain with the sword, *because he taught Balac to lay a stumbling block before the children of Israel*, Numb. 31. 8. The Sons of *Eli* were upon the like account slain by the *Philistines*, 1 Sam. 4. 11.

But that's not all: For besides this temporal death, it doth expose a man likewise to *Eternal* death. And 'tis but reason that it should be so, because the sins of such offenders do extend to the ruine of the souls of others; they doing what in them lies *to destroy those for whom Christ dyed*, 1 Cor. 8. 11. 'Tis spoken concerning the abuse of our liberty in things indifferent, 'tis much more concerning actions in themselves sinful.

That's a known Text, *Matth. 18. 6. It were better for a man to have a milstone hung about his neck, and to be cast into the Sea, than to offend one of these little ones.* Now if to offend but one, and that a little one, that is, one that is weak in knowledge and faith, will expose a man to a certain and dreadful vengeance, what then may they expect, who in regard of the eminence of their place, reputation, profession,
do

do occasion a more general and spreading scandal, both in respect of the number and quality of the persons offended, and cause the ways of God to be commonly evil spoken of? As if the profession of Religion, were but a design to bring about some politick ends, and as if all men who did pretend to holiness, were to be suspected as deceivers; if those that brought up an evil report upon the Land of promise, were so severely punished, being destroyed by a plague from heaven; Certainly then, the offence and the punishment ought to be estimated to be as much greater here, as this heavenly *Canaan* is better than that earthly.

Numb. 14.
37.

3. I have but one *Use* more, and that shall be for *Exhortation*, to persuade us unto the study of this duty in the *Text*. That we would every one in our several places, endeavour to bring honour to our profession, and to vindicate it from those reproaches, to which the unworthy conversation of some professors hath exposed it. I know not any duty more seasonable to be pressed than this, because of those so great and common scandals that have been given in our Time;
Wherein

Wherein too many have justified all those old Calumnies and Reproaches, which the malice of the ancient *Heathen* was wont to charge upon the primitive Christians.

For our better direction in the performance of this dury, you may please to remember what was suggested before. That the nature of *adorning* doth consist in these two things: The removal of *Blemishes*, and the addition of *Ornaments*.

1. For the Removal of *Blemishes*: There are several things which are after a more especial manner blemishes to the conversation of a Christian. Besides those grosser vices, which are most opposite to the purity of Evangelical doctrine, by which this profession should be distinguished from all others: I say besides these, there are some actions likewise, which seeming not to contain in them any gross iniquity or injustice, are thereupon more easily fallen into. And yet being destructive to peace and friendship amongst men, and against the good of humane Society, and consequently hateful to the generality of mankind, and therefore very great blemishes to the profession of
of

of Religion. Such are *suspiciousness*, *evil surmisings*, *tale-bearers*, which are the *fewel to contention*, as the *Wiseman* speaks, *Prov.* 26. 20. *Malignity*, that is, an aptness to put the worst construction upon things; *whispering*, *backbiting*, *rash censuring* of others; which things in the opinion of *St. James* are not consistent with the very shew or profession of Religion. *If any man amongst you seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that mans religion is vain*, *Jam.* 1. 26. Being *busy-bodies*, under the pretence of zeal and religion, in the affairs of others, wherein we are not concerned, which is very apt to provoke men unto much indignation and prejudice.

And then besides these blemishes, which concern our civil conversation with others, there are some likewise which men are subject unto in the performance of their Religious duties. An imprudent opennes, and too much affectation in them, as if we did them to be seen of men. A being strict in lesser things, and loose in greater, which is *to walk circumspectly, as fools not as wise*, and hath usually much provocation in it. There are several other things

things of this nature, which I cannot stand to enumerate; but these are some of those particular failings, to which those who would be thought the more strict professors are subject, which ought to be avoided, as being after a more especial manner blemishes to our Profession.

2. There are some peculiar Virtues and Graces, which are commended to us, as being more especial ornaments to our Profession.

1 Pet. 3. 15

1. Nothing doth become men more than a holy reverence and fear in speaking of the things of God. There is an uncomeliness, and there may be a superstition too, in the unseasonable mixing of sacred things with mirth.

2. In reference to *others*, nothing is of a more universal approbation, than *Love* and *Justice*.

1. For *Love*, there must be a *philanthropia*, extending to the good of mankind and publick benefit; not confining our designs within the narrow compass of our own private advantage, and the observance of our selves: And there must be a *philadelphia* too, a more especial love to the brethren, and readiness to serve and help them, especially
for

for such as are in distress, and in a state of affliction. The works of mercy to such are not only sweet odors in the sight of God, but before men.

2. And so for *Justice* likewise: Uprightness and single-heartedness, a freedom from guile and designs, being commendable amongst all professions of men. And therefore the neglect or want of these must needs be a great blemish amongst Christians. When those that are professors shall be more ready to serve the interest of a Party, than to observe the rules of justice and equity; this must needs occasion hard thoughts and speeches against them.

3. In regard of *our selves*; the holy Ghost doth frequently commend to us, *humility, meekness, modesty*, as being the most comely ornaments, and indeed the very badge and livery of our Profession. We are exhorted to be *clothed with humility*, resembling it to a garment, with which we are to deck our selves; and *a meek and quiet spirit* is expressly compared unto, and preferred before the *adorning with gold and apparel*; and as those are usually valued by men, so this is said to be *in the sight of God of great price*, 1 Pet. 3. 4. And
the

the Scripture styles modest behaviour, *neat*, 1 Tim. 3. 2. *κοσμιος*. That's the Word, we translate it, *of good behaviour*, but 'tis the same with this in the Text, and signifies properly *neat* or *comely*.

Nothing is more frequently inculcated in the Gospel, than these kind of graces, that we should be *gentle, easie to be intreated*, favourable towards the infirmities of others, putting the best construction upon things; Being *soft* in our answers, *slow to anger*, *ready to forgive*, *overcoming evil with good*, *speaking evil of no man*, *being no brawlers*, but *gentle*, *shewing all meekness to all men*, Titus 3. 2.

These graces are all of them of such a lovely and winning nature, that it would exceedingly promote the interest of Religion if they did more shine forth in the lives of those who call themselves Professors in these times.

'Tis true, these Graces do more naturally arise from a condition of trouble and suffering, as the primitive times were. And in such days as these, when the profession of Religion is in fashion, and advantageous to a mans secular ends, and the Church in a kind of
of

of triumphant condition, many of those who profess Religion (if they are not otherwise persons of judgment and solid worth) are more apt to grow insolent, and rugged towards others. But yet these Graces would be no less comely now, than they were then. Nay the greater the difficulty of them is, the greater would their ornament be. And therefore the more watchful ought we to be, in respect of the temptations against them.

I know there are several other things which some men make choice of for the ornaments of Religion, as skill in some affected insignificant Phrases, or some high airy notions, zeal for some particular forms, or in serving the interest of a Party. Nothing is more obvious to any ones observation, than that many men do principally insist upon some such things as these, for the great ornaments of their profession, by which they measure themselves and others.

Whereas some of these things are so far from being ornaments, that they are at the best but spots and blemishes, and the best of them are but fashions, which though they may seem

K

comely

comely in some particular place and seasons, yet they have not any absolute beauty in them, and at another time will appear deformed. Whereas these other things I have mentioned, will never be out of fashion, as having in them an absolute beauty of their own, not depending upon places, times, or opinion.

The End of the Fourth Sermon.

The Fifth Sermon.

At a *Visitation* holden at *London*.

TITUS II. 15.

These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority: LET NO MAN DESPISE THEE.

THese words do contain one of the Apostolical Rules or Canons, whereby Church-officers are directed to preserve the dignity of their places, and the authority of their ministry, and therefore cannot be unseasonable for the present occasion and solemnity.

In the beginning of this *Chapter* the Apostle had mentioned that *sound Doctrine* which he would have *Titus*

K 2

in

in his preaching to insist upon, with reference to several ages, sexes, and conditions of persons, to *verse 11.*

After which he proceeds to a brief recapitulation of these more *general* duties wherein all men are concerned, of *Sobriety, Righteousness, and Godliness*: And takes notice of those new peculiar reasons, whereby the Gospel doth oblige men to a strict observance of these moral duties, *namely*: 1. From that great reward which it doth more clearly propose, *The blessed hope, and that glorious appearing of the great God*, v. 13. 2. From the assistance which it gives to us, by *redeeming us from our Iniquities*, v. 14. Abolishing the guilt, and subduing the power of sin; which ought to be very powerful motives, whereby Christians should be excited to become *a peculiar people*, separate from the rest of the world; *zealous of good works*; striving by their fervency, and diligence, and chearfulness, as much to excel others in their *obedience*, as they do in the *privileges*.

Having mentioned these great fundamental duties, he thereupon subjoyns this exhortation, *these things speak, and exhort and rebuke with all authority.*

These

These things, i. e. especially these more substantial and weighty matters, wherein the essence of Religion doth consist, in opposition to other smaller points of less evidence or consequence.

These things speak: Be ready to instruct such as are ignorant in these duties; *and exhort* them to a careful observance of them. And if any man be so contumacious, notwithstanding this instruction and exhortation, as to violate these known duties, let him be *rebuked with all authority*. Do not deal with such an one in a precarious way, but with such a courage and majesty, as may become him who hath power in the name of God to command others to observe their duties. The messengers of God should not fear the faces of men; such kind of matters, as *these*, are of that evidence and importance, as may well bear a man out, to speak with authority, and to strike an awe upon the hearts of such as shall gainsay and oppose them.

And in order to this, that such rebukes may be of authority, and the more effectual; the Apostle adviseth to take special care, that *no man despise him*.

K 3

Not

Not as if it were in our power what others shall think of us. For as *honor est in honorante*, so is contempt likewise: Men will take the liberty of judging as they please; they may through ignorance, or malice, or envy, have mean thoughts of those that are most worthy; but though the *form* of honour be not in our power, yet the *matter* of it is, namely virtuous and worthy actions. And we may *deserve* the esteem of others, though they should be so unjust as deny it to us.

So that the meaning of this exhortation of *not letting others despise us*, must be, so far as in us lies, we must be careful not to do any thing which may give occasion to others to have mean and despicable thoughts of us. That man's exhortations and rebukes must needs be altogether vain and insignificant, who by any unworthy actions hath rendered himself contemptible: Whereas, if by well-doing we approve our selves to the consciences of others, it cannot be but that we shall have authority with them. Men must and will stand in awe of us, when we demean our selves so as they may have reason to believe that
when

when we are angry, God is displeased with them.

I shall prosecute my discourse upon this Text, with all imaginable plainness, under these *three* heads.

1. I shall endeavour to shew what *despising* is, and wherein it consists.

2. Of what great consequence it is, that Ministers should preserve themselves from contempt.

3. The means how this may be done.

And then conclude all with some brief application.

I. Concerning the nature of *despising*, what it is, and wherein it consists: It signifies briefly, cheap and low thoughts of a person, together with a suitable demeanour towards him.

The most proper object of it, is *littleness* and impotence. Whatever we apprehend to be of any kind of power, we have a suitable regard to it. If it be of a hurtful nature, we hate and fear, and take care to avoid it: But as for such things as are little and impotent, not able to do either good or hurt, we are not any further concerned for them, but barely to despise and condemn them.

'Tis properly opposed to *honouring*; both of them being originally acts of the understanding, in passing judgment upon the nature of things.

When we do in our minds own or acknowledge the real worth or virtue of any one, this is *inward honouring*; when we testify this by our words or actions, this is *external honouring*: And so on the other side, when we do in our thoughts take notice of, and acknowledge the vileness or worthlessness of things or persons, this is *inward despising*, which in Scripture phrase is stiled, *counting a thing vile, setting it at nought, esteeming it as dung*. When we testify this by words or actions, this is *external contempt*, and in Scripture phrase is expressed by *kicking at a thing; treading it under our feet, casting it behind us, turning our back upon it, puffing at it*.

Dent. 25. 3

27. 16

Phil 3. 8.

1 Sam. 2

39.

Psal. 12. 5.

Both these abstractly considered, are of an indifferent nature, neither good nor evil in themselves, but as they are circumstantiated by their manner, and measure, and objects. Every man should proportion his esteem of things, according to the real value of them, *not calling good, evil, or evil good*. Where there

there is no real worth, men may, and should despise; nor ought they towards such things to give any honour. 'Tis as much a mans duty *to contemn a vile person, as to honour them that fear the Lord.* Psal. 15.4.

'Tis true, we should abstract betwixt the *calling* and *persons* of others. There may be a reverence due to the *calling*, when there is none due to the *person* but only upon account of his *calling*; and 'tis a sin in men not to distinguish in such cases. But withal 'tis so easy, so common, so natural a thing, for the scandal of a *person* to reflect upon his *profession*, that it shall be put upon his account, as being part of his guilt, that he hath laid a stumbling-block in the way of others, by causing them to speak evil of his profession. And as things now are in the world, nothing can be more vain, than for men to think that the *dignity of their places* will keep up their esteem in the hearts of others, without the foundation of *real worth in their persons*.

Now amongst all other things whatsoever, there is nothing that hath in it so much provocation as *contempt*. 'Tis much worse than *hatred*; that suppo-
seth

seth a man to be considerable. The Philosophers make it to be the occasion of all *anger*: And experience tells us, 'tis one of the hardest things to be born, even by wise and good men.

And so much shall serve to be spoken concerning the *first* head, the nature of *despising*, &c. I proceed to the *second*.

II. Of what great importance it is for persons in this sacred function, to preserve themselves from *contempt*. Which may be made evident by three kind of arguments, upon the account of 1. *Fitness* and *congruity*: 2. *Necessity* and *duty*: and 3. *Interest* and advantage.

1. Upon the account of *Fitness* and *Congruity*: The *Apostle* had declared it as a rule a little before the *Text*, v. 10. That *Servants should adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*. By *Servants* in those times are meant, amongst others, such as were *slaves*, bought and sold in the Market, the lowest and basest condition of men; and yet these are obliged by the rules of Christianity so to demean themselves, as to *adorn their profession*, and win over others to a love of it; and therefore those of a higher calling and station, must needs be so much
the

the more obliged to this, as they have greater abilities and opportunities for it.

The men of our *Calling* ought to be of such eminence, that others in comparison to them, may be called *Grege*, the *Flock*, of which we are the *Governours* and *Pastors*. 'Tis required as a previous condition to capacitate a man for this *Calling*, that he must have a *good report of those that are without*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 7. i. e. of the Heathens and Unbelievers; who, though they are not competent judges of *faith* and *opinions*, yet they may be of *manners* and *honesty*. And if this be required to admission into that *Calling*, 'tis most reasonable that men should not lose it afterwards. We are the *lights of the world*, and therefore ought to contribute to the beauty of it: The *salt of the Earth*, and therefore ought to be of grateful and savoury conversation.

There lies a more peculiar obligation upon persons in publick places, to preserve their reputations clear and without blemish. The higher any thing is situated in the universe, the more lustre hath it, as the Stars: And so likewise is it in the body, the superior

superior parts, the face and eyes, are the proper seat for beauty and comeliness.

A *private* person is not so much concerned to look after *publick* fame, as he who is engaged in publick employment. That kind of generous virtue which can abundantly satisfy it self with the conscience of well-doing, while in a private station, if once called to any such employment, where it must be useful to others by its Authority, 'tis most fitting then, that it should seek the aid of opinion and publick esteem. Because 'tis this which rules the world, and stamps upon things the rates at which they are to pass. Not that this can add any thing to a man's virtue, more than the light of the Sun doth to the beauty of the other creatures in the universe, but only render it more conspicuous and visible to others, who are to be influenced by it. That's the first argument: There is a *Congruity* that such persons as are of *publick employment*, should be of *publick esteem*.

2. 'Tis necessary also, upon the account of *Duty*, both towards *others* and *our selves*.

1. With

1. With respect to those with whom we converse, who are committed to our charge; towards whom we must needs be altogether insignificant and as mere cyphers, unless we demean our selves so as to be revered by them.

There are two things which every man ought with his utmost care to attend unto, *Conscience* and *Credit*.

The *first* chiefly for our selves, the *other* both for our selves and others: *Nobis est necessaria vita nostra, aliis fama nostra*: As St. *Austin* speaks. He is cruel to himself who neglects the *first*, and he is both imprudent to himself, and useless to others, who neglects the *second*.

When God gives men favour and respect in the eyes of others, the proper improvement of it is, to make use of it as an advantage for prevailing with them, and doing good upon them. Whereas without this, all that a man can do or say, must be ineffectual. If he himself be once looked upon as contemptible, 'tis not to be expected that others should have any regard to his exhortations and counsels. You know the story of that people, who refused
their

their consent to a good Law, because it was proposed by a vile person.

Authority in the first notion of it is a relative term, and doth import that reverend opinion which men have concerning the persons of others: It consists of *Love* and *Fear*. It supposes as its correlate, *Venerableness*, that is, goodness and power, in the persons whom it refers to. And these two, according to the rule of Relations, *mutuò se ponunt & tollunt*. Where there is no *venerableness*, there can be no *authority*, in this sense.

2. Upon account of *duty* towards *our selves*, who by being despised may be rendered desperate; there being no such way to make a man loose and profligate, as to have a blasted name. Shame is one of the most powerful curbs to restrain men from unworthy courses; and where this doth not, there is little hope that any thing else should prevail. Reproach is stiled *the snare of the Devil*, 1 Tim. 3. 7. Because they who are deservedly fallen under this, are as much in his power, and at his disposal, as if he had taken them in a snare.

The

The appetite of glory is that natural principle, whereby we are to be quickened unto virtuous actions. And without a sense of honour, no man is like ever to attempt any thing that is great and noble. *Negligere quid de se quisque sentiat, non solum arrogantis est, sed etiam dissoluti*, saith Tully. No man doth neglect or despise a good name, but such a one as doth either *despair of*, or *resolve against*, doing any thing that may deserve it.

3. 'Tis highly advantageous upon the account of *Interest*. And that both in regard to the *benefit* to be hereby *obtained*, and the *mischief* to be *avoided*.

1. For the *advantage* accruing to us, by preserving our selves from being despised: Honour is the greatest blessing among all humane things which this world can afford us; infinitely to be preferred before riches or pleasures, and in some cases before life it self. *A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches: and loving favour rather than silver or gold.* One that is a generous virtuous man, will chuse to die rather than to do any thing that may justly expose him to infamy. St. Paul was

Prov. 22. 1.

Eccles. 7. 1.

Eccles. 41.

12, 13.

of

of this mind, 1 Cor. 9. 15. *It were better for me to die, than that any should make my glorying void.*

And because 'tis a thing of so great excellency, therefore do we pay it, as the best service we can do, to God, and to his Deputies, *Magistrates* and *Parents*. 'Tis the reward of virtue, and therefore doth highly deserve our esteem.

Besides the advantage we have by this while we live, 'tis one of those things that will abide after us, when we are gone out of the world, and for that reason a special regard is to be had to it; and the more wise and virtuous any man is, the more care will he take to transmit a grateful memory of himself to future times: And if he must be spoken of after his departure, that he be well spoken of, that his name may be as a *precious ointment*, leaving a perfume behind it, that men may rise up at the mention of him, and call him *blessed*.

2. 'Tis our *interest*, in reference to the avoiding of that mischief which we may otherwise be exposed unto by doing things that will render us despicable. I shall mention only two places

places of Scripture which will afford abundant proof to this purpose. One is, 1 Sam. 2. 17. Where 'tis said of the Sons of *Eli*, that they did by their scandalous carriage *render themselves vile before all the assembly, and caused them to abhor the offerings of the Lord.* And 'tis worth your special notice, that which follows upon this. I do not know any more dreadful threats in the whole Bible, Chap. 3. 11. God tells them, that he will execute his vengeance upon them in such a manner, as shall strike a dread and horror by the very relation of it, and *cause both the ears of them that hear it to tingle:* And again, v. 14. *I have sworn to the house of Eli, that their iniquity shall not be purged with sacrifices nor with offerings for ever:* i. e. Those very means which were appointed as the remedy and expiation for other mens sins, shall be no benefit to *them.* *Sacrifices and Offerings* were the things about which they had offended, by rendering them contemptible, causing others to abhor them: And therefore no reason for such persons to expect any remedy from them, whatsoever their particular repentance might do, as to the saving of their souls.

L

The

The offences they had committed were so highly scandalous, that God was immutably resolved, (*he had sworn it*) to execute upon them some signal vengeance in this life, that should manifest to the world how much he was concerned, for that dishonour which these men had cast upon his Worship. Which judgments did afterwards accordingly come to pass in the sudden death of *Eli* and his *two Sons*, and his *Daughter in Law*; in the rejection of *Abiathar* from the Priest's Office; and in that Massacre committed by *Saul* at *Nob*, upon *fourscore and five Priests* of this family, together with their wives, and children, and servants.

1 King. 2.

27.

1 Sam. 22.

19.

The other Scripture is that, *Malach.* 2. towards the beginning, where speaking of such Priests as by their unworthy carriage did render the publick worship contemptible, and *cause others to stumble at the Law*, God threatens that *he will send a curse upon them, and will curse their blessings, and spread dung upon their faces, and make them contemptible and base before all the people.* And there is nothing more equal, than that those who expose religion to contempt, should suffer under it themselves.

v. 8.

v. 2.

v. 3.

v. 9.

See Jerem.

23. 40.

Now

Now to put all this together ; If we have any ingenuity , and desire to do things decent and congruous to our Profession ; any sense of the duty which we owe to others, whom it is our business to persuade ; or which we owe to our selves, in the preservation of that whereby we are to be excited unto virtuous and worthy actions : If we have any sense of our own interest, in securing to our selves the greatest blessing, and avoiding the greatest mischief that this world can afford, it will upon all accounts highly concern us, that we do not so demean our selves as to deserve to be despised.

III. I proceed to the third general head proposed, namely the *means* whereby we are to preserve our selves from contempt ; which are of two kinds : *Negative* and *Positive*.

1. *Negative*, or such things as in order to this we are carefully to avoid. All kind of vices whatsoever, especially such as have in them a more peculiar deformity and turpitude, which are most likely to alienate the minds of others from us.

I observed before, that *littleness* and impotence is the most proper object of contempt. *I am small and despised*, saith David, Psal. 119. 141.

So that all such qualities and actions, as will make us appear unto others to be but minute and little things, must needs render us despicable.

Such are *Narrowness* of mind, judging of things and persons by little measures; setting up for reputation by zeal in the smallest matters, with neglect of the greater; Putting the highest value upon those little things of gain and promotion, and the favour of men; which therefore ought to be esteemed but little, because they cannot make us better, and we can enjoy them but a little while. We must shortly go out of this world, when all such things shall be useless to us, and therefore ought not to come in competition with those other matters, which may conduce to our living with honour, and dying with comfort.

Being subject to immoderate desires, fears, impatience; to be amused and transported with wonder at outward pomp and grandeur. All which doth arise from a wrong estimate of things
oc-

occasioned by our own littleness. *Magna Senec. ista, quia parvi sumus, credimus.* These things would not seem great to us, if we our selves were not little.

From whence will follow a fervility of spirit, a readiness to dissemble, flatter, revile, to bow down to any kind of baseness before such whom we conceive able to assist or to hinder us in our little designs of gain: And on the other side, demeaning our selves with insolence towards others from whom we can neither hope nor fear any thing in this kind.

These are blemishes, which in all ages the men of our Calling have been accused of. And the truth is, they are liable to some peculiar temptations in this kind, more than others: And therefore ought to be more especially careful for the avoiding of them.

To which I shall only add this one consideration: If we of the *Clergy* would not have others to despise us, we must be careful not to despise one another. Those in places of dignity and power should not carry it with too great a distance from their brethren. The proper notation of the word *despise*, is to look down upon a thing, as being much below us.

L 3

And

And much less should they permit any of their *Officers*, to carry themselves with insolence towards such as are of this sacred Function. It cannot be but that others will despise us, when they see that we despise one another.

2. The *Positive* means to this end, are, in general, all kind of virtue and goodness. But there are some things which the *Apostle* adviseth to, as having a more peculiar fitness and tendency to this purpose, ὅσα σεμνὰ, ὅσα πρὸς φιλίᾳ, ὅσα ἐυφημια, *Whatsoever things are venerable; whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, ταῦτα λογίζεσθε, have these things in account, Phil. 4. 8.*

Of these I shall mention only three.

1. *Wisdom.*

2. *Generosity and largeness of mind.*

3. *Holiness of life.*

I. *Wisdom, this makes a man's face to shine, and the strength of it to be doubled, Eccles. 8. 1. Puts a lustre upon a person, renders him venerable and amiable, conciliates an honour and an awe from those with whom he converseth.*

By

By *wisdom* I mean, *recta ratio agibilium*, as *Aquinas* defines it. Not only skill in books, and things, and notions, but the art of business, directing a man to what is fit and convenient in several cases and circumstances, the knowledge of humane nature, of the various inclinations, tempers, interests of men and times. 'Tis not sufficient for him that would be a Pilot, to understand the general Theory of Navigation, without the knowledge of particular Coasts, and Shelves, and Currents, and Tydes, and Winds.

'Tis by this virtue of prudence, that a man must be enabled to cut off occasion from them that would seek occasion, 2. Cor. 11. 12. And, considering that great variety and inconstancy which there is in the judgments and affections of men, the clashings and intanglements of cross interests, the several changes and vicissitudes that befall humane affairs; I say, all these things considered, it is not mere integrity, without great prudence, that can preserve a man in a constant and clear reputation.

2. *Generosity* of mind, magnanimity. As littleness will render a man despicable, so by the rule of contraries,

this true greatness and largeness of soul must make him venerable. By this I mean an inclination of mind to things that are truly great and noble, making virtue and true honour the common measure of every thing, aiming at that which is great and excellent in every kind of virtue; having but a small esteem for any of these external matters, because they can add nothing to our inward real worth.

Every man is endowed with a natural principle, inclining him to a state of happiness; and hath in some measure both an ability to judge of, and a freedom or liberty to apply himself *unto*, those moral actions or duties, which are the proper means for the promoting of this end. Nor is he upon any other account to be justly praised or blamed, but according to the right or wrong use of this natural liberty. And therefore according as such a man doth find either in himself or others a constant and firm resolution to make a right use of this, so doth he proportion his esteem towards them. Preferring this inward greatness, this rectitude of mind, whereby a man is resolved in every condition, to do that
which

which shall appear to be his duty, before any kind of external greatness whatsoever.

And if men did rightly understand their true interests, there is nothing more suitable or more advantageous to human nature than this. *Magnanimos nos natura produxit, & ut quibusdam animalibus ferum dedit, quibusdam subdolem, quibusdam pavidum, ita nobis gloriosum & excelsum spiritum, quarentem ubi honestissime, non ubi tutissime vivat.* We are naturally born with greater and more generous souls than other creatures, and therefore for a man to debase himself below the Nobility of his creation, may justly expose him to contempt.

Sen. Epi.
104.

'Tis this that must make a man humble and gentle, set him above the common impotencies of pride and passion, the false disguises of greatness. Of which kind of temper it may be truly said, *non est magnitudo, tumor est.*

'Tis this that must keep us from being puffed up with prosperity, or dejected with adversity; free us from being envious, suspicious, fearful, being secure upon the confidence of our own innocence; not being subject to those vehement desires and impatience

tience whereby others are transported. Because those things which provoke them, seem but little to us, and therefore must have but little power over us.

'Tis this that must make a man prefer an empire over himself, before power over others; and the opportunity of being helpful to others, before the advantage of gaining by them; bearing good will to all mankind, compassionate, affable, officious, raking all opportunities of doing good to every one. Nor is there any other qualification whatsoever, that will make a man appear more grateful and lovely even to enemies themselves, than this generous frame of mind.

3. The *third* particular I mentioned to this purpose, was *Holiness of life*. Which is frequently mentioned in Scripture as a proper means to keep our esteem in the hearts of others, and preserve us from being despised. They that would be *blameless*, must be *harmless*, carrying themselves as the *Sons of God without rebuke*, Philip. 2. 15. And a little before the *Text*, v. 7. the *Apostle* exhorts *Titus*, to *shew himself*
a pat-

a pattern of good works, that he who is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. So again, 1 Pet. 2. 16. 'Tis said that a good conversation will make people ashamed to speak evil of us. And it was by faith and holiness that the Elders obtained a good report, Heb. 11. 2.

In the 1 Tim. 4. 12. there is the same precept with this in the Text, *Let no man despise thy youth*: To which 'tis immediately subjoined as the most proper direction to this purpose, *but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in purity.*

When a man is careful to say what is good, and to do what is honest; to speak well, and to act better, endeavouring to be what he would seem to be, avoiding all suspicions and appearances of evil; when he is zealous according to his capacity for the promoting of publick good, acting sincerely, prudently and justly; endeavouring to make the times the better for him wherein he lives, this will be the most effectual means to make his name honourable, and his memory precious.

More

More particularly : The demeaning of our selves with all due respect and lowliness to our Superiors, is one of those *well-doings whereby we are to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*, 1 Pet. 2. 13, 15, 18.

The proportioning of our zeal, according to the real worth and importance of things, that's another *Apostolical* direction to this purpose, *Rom. 14. 15, 16.* Having said, *Let not your good be evil spoken of*, he presently adds: *For the kingdom of God is not meats and drinks, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost; whosoever in these things serveth Christ, shall be accepted of God, and approved of men*

Being mild and gentle, not boisterous and peremptory; having *the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit*; endeavouring *as much as in us lies to live in peace with all men*, as being that which gives opportunity to the more calm, benign, ingenuous operations of religion in the world.

Wherever these qualifications are, they must and will contract at least a secret reverence, even from those that may outwardly pretend to hate and despise us.

I have

I have now done with the three general *Heads* proposed; it remains that I add something briefly by way of *application*, in answer to this case, What's to be done if men will despise us, though we do not deserve it from them? In order thereunto, I shall suggest two things.

I. By way of rebuke to such despisers, who if they would but consult the Scriptures, should find this unworthy disposition set off with such great aggravations, both as to the nature of the *sin*, and the *punishments* that shall be inflicted upon it, as were enough to fright men from offending in this kind.

1. For the *Nature* of the sin: The *Wiseman* tells us, *He that despiseth his neighbour, is void of wisdom*, Prov. 11. 12 and *finneth*, chap. 14. 21. 'Tis made the character of a proud *Pharisee*, to despise others, *Luke* 18. 9. That which renders men like to dogs and swine, trampling precious things under their feet. *Esaü* was therefore branded with the note of prophaness, because he despised holy things, *Heb.* 12. 16, 17. All which, tho it be bad enough, yet that is much worse, which our
Saviour

Saviour affirms concerning it, *Luke 10. 16.* *He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.* And what a horrid thing that must be for a poor mortal man to contemn the omnipotent God, I need not, I cannot say: He himself hath said, that as he will honour those that honour him, so those that despise him shall be lightly esteemed, *1 Sam. 2. 30.* And he who is the King of kings, must needs be the fountain of honour to dispose of it as he pleaseth. Those men shall be sure to be put to shame whom God doth despise, *Psal. 53. 5.*

2. As for those judgments of all kinds which this sin will expose unto, I shall only refer you to some few Scriptures.

1. For Temporal judgments: See that place, *2 Chron. 36. 16, 17.* *They mocked the messengers of God, and despised their words, and misused the Prophets, till the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, that there was no remedy; therefore he brought upon them the King of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword, and had no compassion upon young men and maidens, old men, or him that stooped for age;*
he

he gave them all into his hand. Where the ruine of the Jewish Nation, wherein they were deprived of all kind of privileges, both civil and ecclesiastical, is ascribed to this sin.

That's a dreadful imprecation in *Nehemiah* 4. 4, 5. *Hear, O our God, for we are despised, and turn their reproach upon their own heads, and give them for a prey in the land of Captivity, and cover not their iniquity, let not their sin be blotted out from before thee.*

2. And as for punishments in the other world: St. Peter tells us, *that those who despise dominions, and speak evil of dignities, shall perish in their own corruption, 2 Pet. 2. 10. And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, v. 12.* To which St. Jude adds, *that there is reserved for them the blackness of darkness for ever, v. 8. and 13.*

II. By way of Direction, to those who are thus unworthily despised, not to be discouraged at it, remembering what St. Paul saith, *that with us it is but a small thing to be judged of man's judgment, but to approve our selves unto God in honour and dishonour: Considering what he hath promised, that when men speak evil against us falsely, great*

1 Cor. 4. 3.

2 Cor. 6.

Mat. 5. 11. *great shall our reward be in heaven: And*

1 Cor 4. 5. *we shall have praise of God.* 'Tis said of

Heb. 12. our Saviour, that *he despised the shame:*

And so should we too, contemn the contempt of injurious scornful men. This

perhaps was the meaning of that precept to the disciples, of *shaking the dust off*

Matt. 10.

14

Acts 13. 51

their feet against those that despised them.

Cicero

Deſc. 2.

True honour is *Consentiens laus bonorum*. Such only can give true praise, who are themselves praise-worthy. For a man deeply to resent his being despised by ignorant or unworthy men, is over-much to honour them, as if their esteem could add any thing to our reputation.

To shut up all in a word; you have heard of what great consequence it is, that we should preserve ourselves from being despised, and by what means this is to be done. Let me beseech you to consider and apply these things. We all pretend to be zealous for the welfare of the Church, and very good reason we should be so: But now, if in good earnest we are desirous to promote the honour and interest of it, these are

are the ways whereby it must be done ; and (whatsoever any may think) nothing else, without these, can be effectual to this purpose.

My brethren, 'tis not so long ago, but that we may and ought still to remember it, what floods of contempt have been poured upon our sacred Profession, how it hath been exposed to indignities of all kinds. For which, though there be abundant reason to shame and condemn those unworthy men who were the instruments of it, yet there is cause enough to believe, that the holy Providence of God, who thought fit thus to permit and dispose of it, had just occasion for it, and wise ends in it. Will it not then concern us to examine, what those former provocations might be, whether any of those particulars I have mentioned, that we may endeavour to prevent the like judgment for the future ; lest if it should again befall us, it should make an utter end, and not admit of a second remedy.

Wherefore I beseech you, as you have any tenderness for your own

M

Re-

Reputation, for the dignity of your callings, for the peace of the Nation, for the honour of Religion, that you would be very jealous of all such things as may reflect disparagement on your holy calling.

'Tis not the opposition of enemies on all hands that can do us so much hurt, as the scandal and folly of pretending friends. If our enemies be more prudent and holy, more humble and useful in their conversations than we are, it cannot be but that they shall be revered, when we shall be despised.

What remains then, but that we make our addressees to the *Father of lights*, that he would continually supply his Church with faithful Pastors, who may make it their business to honour God, and serve their generations, and adorn their profession: That he would sanctify us with his spirit, and fill all our hearts with his fear, that walking worthy of our Calling, we may be honoured while we live, and happy when we dye.

Now

Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work, to do his will; working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.

The End of the fifth Sermon.

The Sixth Sermon

Ecclesiastes I. 18.

For in much wisdom there is much grief:
and he that encreaseth knowledge
encreaseth sorrow.

There are two kind of things
which every serious consider-
ing man is naturally very
thoughtful about, and indu-
cive after, the way of Providence, and
the way of Happiness. Both which in
reference to the various opinions and
conjectures of men, are particularly
and largely discussed in two several
Books of Scripture.

The first in the book of Job, wherein
we have the most natural things and ob-
vious suggestions of mens hearts con-
cerning the reason and design of Pro-
vidence in the dispensation of good and

evil.

The Sixth Sermon.

ECCLES. I. 18.

*For in much wisdom there is much grief;
and he that increaseth knowledge
increaseth sorrow.*

THere are *two* kind of things which every serious considering man is naturally very thoughtful about, and inquisitive after, the *ways* of *Providence*, and the *ways* of *Happiness*. Both which in reference to the various opinions and conjectures of men, are particularly and largely discussed in two several Books of Scripture.

The *first* in the book of *Job*, wherein we have the most natural risings and obvious suggestions of mens hearts, concerning the reasons and designs of Providence in the dispensation of good and evil.

M 3

The

The *other* in this book of *Ecclesiastes*, wherein are set down the different thoughts and attempts of men according to their several principles and tempers in the pursuit after happiness.

In the first verse of this chapter we have a description of the *Preacher*, the *Son of David*, *King in Jerusalem*.

The second verse is his *Text*: *Vanity of Vanities*, &c. This he doth largely prove by some general reasons to the twelfth verse of this *Chap.* and by an induction of particulars, in several of the following *Chapters*.

The general reasons are chiefly *four*.

1. *The fruitlessnes of all our labours*, v. 3. by which we are not able to procure for our selves any substantial profit וְרֵיקָן *any remainder*, that would tarry with us afterwards; but like a sound they pass away, and leave nothing behind them.

2. *The changeableness and uncertainty of our conditions*; in which respect, we are much inferior to our other fellow-creatures. This he illustrates by *four* examples or similitudes.

1. From the *Earth*, which though it seems to be but as the sediment and rubbish of the creation, yet it is better

ter than man in respect of its lastingness. For *one generation passeth away, and another cometh, but the earth abides for ever*, v. 4.

2. From the *sun*, which though it do every day decline and set, yet does it constantly rise again and shine with the same glory, v. 5. But man dieth and wasteth away, yea man giveth up the Ghost, and where is he? He lieth down, and riseth not till the heavens be no more, Job 14. 10, 12.

*Soles occidere & redere possunt;
Nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux
Nox est perpetua una dormienda.*

As 'tis elegantly expressed by a Heathen Poet.

3. From the *wind*, the common emblem of uncertainty, yet is it more constant than man. For that knoweth its circuits, and whirls about continually, v. 6. Whereas *our life passeth away as doth the wind, but returneth not again*, Psal. 78. 39.

4. From the *sea*, which though it be as uncertain as the Moon by which 'tis governed, yet it is more constant than man and his happiness. For though the *rivers run into it*, and from it, yet that still keeps to its proper

state and dimensions, v. 7. Whereas man is still subject to ebbs and flows, to waves and tempests, never resting in any settled condition, and at last wears out and vanisheth away. So that in these respects we are much inferior to the very elements of which we are composed.

3. *From that unspeakable wearisomness which is in every condition. All things are full of labour, man cannot utter it,* v. 8. The eye and the ear, are senses not easily cloyed, and yet are they sooner wearied than satisfied; there being such an intrinsical weakness in the best outward delights, that the most capacious senses are quickly glutted, even to a loathing of them.

4. *From the disability of man by any new discovery to restore himself unto a better condition;* since there is no hope of finding any such new way to happiness, which hath not been formerly tried; from the *ninth* to the *eleventh verse*. Though these latter ages in some respects are wiser, yet all their inventions for the substance of them have already been of old time, and *there is no new thing under the Sun*. That fancy of *Plato* being in some sense

sense to be allowed, *that all knowledge is but remembrance*, and forgetfulness the reason of novelty.

These are the general reasons by which the *Wise man* endeavours to prove and illustrate that common vanity which overspreads the face of all things.

In the next place, he does further amplify and confirm this by an induction of those particulars in which men usually place their happiness; *Wisdom* and *Learning*, in the remaining part of this *Chapter*; *Mirth* and *Jollity*, chap. 2. 1. *Sensual delights*, v. 3. *Works of Magnificence* and *Pleasure*, v. 4, 5, 6. *External Pomp* and greatness, v. 7. *Abundance of Riches* and treasure, v. 8, 9.

The *Text* I have chosen doth contain *Salomon's* censure and experiment concerning the *first* of these, which of all other things in the world doth bear in it the fairest appearance and probability of affording satisfaction to the mind: This being its proper food, and suitable to its desires, and most excellent in it self. And therefore the Devil being to tempt our first parents in the state of innocence, doth pro-

propose this to them, as the most likely temptation to prevail with such intelligent natures, that *they should know good and evil.*

Now because Learning is of *two* kinds, either of *Business* or *Things*; therefore *Solomon* makes a distinct enquiry into each. The *first* he calls *Wisdom*, the other *Knowledge*: And he was himself very eminent for his great ability in both; having made this choice, when it was put to him, that he might have wisdom and knowledge, *2 Chron. 1. 10.* And the *Holy Ghost* bears witness of him, that in this respect there was *none like unto him before him*, nor *after him should any arise like unto him*, *1 Kings 3. 12.*

And yet this Wiseman, notwithstanding all the great success of his enquiries, upon a review of them doth find by experience, that as his fruitful studies had encreased his learning, so had they also multiplied his grief. And therefore as the issue of his experiment he lays down this observation which I have read unto you, *that in much wisdom, &c.*

The *Text* then is the result of *Solomon's* experience upon his enquiry after

after happiness in *Learning*. The chief terms of it are reducible under these two heads.

1. The things censured, *Wisdom* and *Knowledge*.

2. The censure past upon them: The one brings grief or indignation: The other sorrow.

I. *Wisdom* is the art of business, directing a man in the practical affairs of life to what is fit and convenient, according to the variety of circumstances. It consists in a solid judgment to discern the tempers and the interests of men, the state of business, the probabilities of events and consequences, together with a presentness of mind to obviate sudden accidents.

II. *Knowledge* doth concern the speculation of Nature in reference to causes and effects, the differences and properties of things.

1. Concerning the first of these, Solomon tells us that there is much grief in it. The original word is עָצָב which signifieth properly indignation; and the nature of that is a sharp anger mixed with scorn, occasioned either by contempt in persons, or disappointment in things.

2. As

2. As for *knowledge*, that *encreaseth sorrow*: Now *sorrow* is a perturbation of mind in the apprehension of some present evil, which we are not able to contest with or avoid. And lest any should mistrust that these were only casual accidental concomitants, without any mutual influence, therefore he tells us that they are usually proportioned to one another, for the measure of them, and do increase together to shew their casual dependence.

We scarce read of any person in Scripture under greater discontent and vexation of mind, than *Achitophel*; in whom it was the eminency of his parts that set home upon his thoughts the disgrace of having his counsel despised, with such aggravations as made him run upon his own voluntary ruin: And there cannot be any higher degree of indignation than that which drives a man to despair and self murder. I shall not need to cite that saying of *Festus*, to *St. Paul*, *much learning hath made thee mad*: Because it was a gross falshood and scandal as he applied it: But yet there was somewhat of the common notion in

Acts 26.

24

in it, that *Nullum magnum ingenium sine mixtura dementiae*. You know that Fable of *Prometheus*, the great inventor of Arts and Philosophy, who is said to have an Eagle or a Vulture perpetually gnawing upon his liver, signifieth those continual cares and anxieties of mind which knowing and inquisitive men are exposed unto.

But the chief proofs of this assertion of *Solomon* I would rank under three Heads, by considering that vexation which there is in the *Getting, Possession, and Loss* of these things.

1. For the *Getting* of them: 'Tis part of the Primitive curse, that nothing is now attainable without the *sweat of our brows*; and the difficulty of every thing is proportionable to the excellency of it: And therefore these being the best of all other things, there must needs be much vexation and labour in the enquiry after them. The *Wise man* speaking concerning the search after wisdom, *v. 13.* tells us, that *this sore travel hath God given to the Sons of Adam, to be exercised or afflicted therewith*: He seems to allude unto that natural thirst and appetite
after

after knowledge, which our first Parents have transmitted down to their posterity: And intimates the great justice and equity, that the Sons of Adam should for *his* ambition and curiosity be punished with a *tantalizing* desire; that the tree of knowledge should be within their view, but out of their reach; so that they could not chuse but desire and attempt after it, but cannot attain unto it. And this earnest desire after knowledge implanted in our hearts, compared with that great difficulty and labour in getting of it, is that *sore travel which God hath given to the Sons of Adam to be afflicted therewith.*

Now the perplexities in this kind must needs be very great; whether we consider the blindness of our understandings, or the intricacy of things themselves; the many dark recesses of nature, the obscurity and implication of causes and effects (there being *δυσνόητα* in the Books of *Scripture* and *Nature*) besides those accidental difficulties, which are occasioned by the subtilty and intanglement of error, the variety of intricate opinions, the many involutions of controversies and dis-

disputes, which are apt to whirl a man about with a *vertigo* of contradictory probabilities ; and instead of settling, to amuse and distract the mind. To which may be added that difficulty and labour which is occasioned by the disease of curiosity, to which inquisitive men are commonly liable: by which they are made to wander about after all kind of varieties, and like *Noah's Dove* are continually hovering, not knowing where to rest themselves or set their feet. So that in all these respects the *Wise man* had just cause to complain, *that much study is a weariness to the flesh*, by reason of those many cares and difficulties in the acquisition of wisdom and knowledge.

2. Nor is it better with us in the *second* place as to the *Possession* of them: It being the property of learning, as not to diminish by communicating, so not to fill up by addition to it: But the thirst after knowledge doth encrease with it; like drink to a man in a fever, which inflames the appetite to a more impetuous craving. Besides that it is apt to bring along with it much disquietness in other respects, in-

infusing into the soul weak fears, vast desires, jealousies, impatience, emulations, doubts; in all which respects it is almost grown into a *Proverb*, that *nihil scire est vita jucundissima*.

The *Philosopher* hath observed it, that the most studious men (though they may be naturally chearful) yet commonly are by their studies and retirement made sour and morose, and less patient of opposition; as being continually chafed and tired out in wrestling with difficulties. And when they have leisure to look abroad upon the state of things round about them, they cannot chuse but see every where much defect and lameness, much confusion and disorder, besides the evils that are afar off; and not being able either to avoid these or amend those, no wonder though their knowledge encreaseth their sorrow. The more skill a man hath in any thing, with so much the more disgust and regret doth he behold the failings and deficiencies in that kind. He that hath in his mind the exact *Idea's* of *Musick* or of *Painting*, cannot hear the discords, or behold the bungling of
such

such as are pretenders to those arts, without displeasure and offence. And thus must it be with every wise man that beholds those irregularities and confusions which he shall meet withal in the world.

But this will yet better appear, if we consider such mens conditions either in relation to their *Sufferings* or *Sins*.

1. For their *Sufferings*: Such persons have usually the most tender sense, and therefore must needs have the greatest sufferings: As an exact health is required to an exquisite pain. They cannot but be very apprehensive of the cares, dangers, and necessities wherewith they are compassed; the injuries and abuses that are offered to them: *Eccles. 7. 7.* 'tis said, that *oppression makes a wise man mad*, that is, transports him to some unusual rage; such an one being best able to see and to judge of the deformity of any unjust, unworthy action; and therefore his heart must needs rise up with much nauseousness and indignation against it.

A man that by his knowlege hath gotten an enlarged heart, is thereby made less capable of a narrow indigent

N

con-

condition. He that useth to busy his thoughts in surveying the vast frame of Nature, the several situations and advantages of Kingdoms, or else in censuring the miscarriages of those publick counsels and transactions upon which the fate of the greatest Nations and Persons have depended; for this man to be himself without any kind of possession or power, and after all these great thoughts to want necessities for himself or family, to be insulted over by some sordid ignorant peasant; how irksome must this be to so such a person? And yet this is oftentimes the case of wise and knowing men: For *the race is not always to the swift, neither yet bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favour to men of skill, but time and chance happens to them all*; that is, the great abilities of these persons cannot secure them, by any such special privilege, but that they may be involved in the same necessities and casualties which befall the common herd of mankind.

Eccles. 9.
11.

2. As for *Sin*: Such persons are more exposed to it, by reason of those temptations to which they are obnoxious;

noxious; knowlege in it self being apt to puff up. And yet they cannot find so much pleasure in it as others, by reason of those inward regrets and smitings of conscience which will imbitter it to them. Nor can they sin at so cheap a rate, by reason of those many stripes denounced against the knowing servant. The Chaldee Paraphrase in translating of the Text, renders the words thus: *That man who increaseth in knowlege, and not in grace and repentance, doth treasure up for himself the anger and indignation of the Lord.* So that in all these respects, there must needs be much vexation, in the possession of wisdom and knowlege.

3. And yet notwithstanding all this, men cannot chuse but be much troubled at the loss of it. Which may be three manner of ways.

1. By the *unfaithfulness of memory*: which is like a leaking vessel, and doth quickly let slip the things committed to its custody. Now it must needs be a great vexation to a man to take much pains in gathering in, and treasuring up, and afterwards to let all drop out again through the chinks of a leaking

memory ; his labour being to as little purpose as if he had laved water into a sieve.

2. Through the defects of old age; when the sun and the moon, and the stars shall be darkened, chap. 12. The Understanding and the other inferior Faculties being deprived of their wonted light and reason: Childhood returning again to the mind as well as to the feeble members. Tis

* De subtil. lib. 16. Richard Swisset, a person that lived about 300 years since; of so profound learning and subtilty that Scaliger saith of him, that his abilities were *sera supra humanum ingenium*. Cardan and he do both agree in this, that he is to be ranked amongst the first ten of the greatest Wits that ever were.

related of a great Scholar, some ages since of this Place, by name Swisset; who for his manner of Writing by demonstrations,

was afterwards called the Calculator; that being grown old, he often wept, because he was not able to understand the Books which he had written in his younger days.

3. By Death, which shall put a period to our Lives and our Learning at once. Now for men to think, that though they run in never so hot a pursuit after knowlege, yet they must shortly be laid in the dust, from whence all

all their learning cannot either preserve or deliver them ; to consider that in this, the Wise hath not a greater Privilege than the Fool ; but the same forgetfulness shall cover both their Memories : *For after death there is no remembrance of the wiseman, more than of the fool ; seeing that which now is, in the days to come shall be forgotten.* And lastly, to consider that after death, the Soul of the most ignorant peasant shall presently know more than the profoundest *Philosophers*, or the most subtile *Schoolman* could ever attain unto. I say to consider all this, is of it self apt to make a man weary of Life and Learning, whereby he is exposed to so much vexation.

I have been so long in the Explication and Proof of this, *that it is so*, that I shall be but brief in the Reasons, *why it is so.*

And I shall mention only those two, which are put together in the fifth *ver.* of this *chapter.* 1. The *impotency* of wisdom and knowledge, *that which is crooked cannot be made straight.* 2. The *imperfection* of it, *that which is wanting cannot be numbred.*

The vexation of every thing is proportionable to the disappointment of it ; which in these things is so much the greater , by how much the hopes and likelihoods of contentment here , are more promising, and yet the trial and issue more remote and contrary. Now that these things are so far from affording real happiness must needs be evident upon these *two* grounds.

1. From their utter *impotence* and disability for that work wherein our happiness doth properly consist , the rectifying of our crooked natures , restoring of us to an uprightness and conformity unto that image after which we were created. Now , who knows not , that it is above the power of any natural wisdom or knowlege fully to discover to us the deformity of our natural states ? much less then can they direct how to recover us out of it. The Devil is perhaps a greater Scholar than any man in the world , and yet all his learning cannot find out a way , how to reinstate himself in his former privileges of a glorified Angel.

2. From

2. From the deficiency and *imperfection* of these things in reference to their own proper faculty, the *Understanding*; that which is wanting cannot be numbred. That is, there are innumerable particulars in Nature, which the most inquisitive judgment shall never reach unto. *No man shall ever find out the works of God from the beginning to the end.* And this is one of the most proper effects of Learning, that it discovers to a man his own ignorance. Now as there is on the one hand much Pleasure in finding out what a man knew not; so must there be a proportionable Grief in the consideration of those innumerable other things which we cannot attain unto. It was the ambition of our first Parents to aspire unto a perfect knowlege, *to be like Gods, knowing good and evil*; and therefore 'tis but just that their posterity should be thus afflicted by the vexation of their imperfect knowlege. It must needs be a greater trouble to an inquisitive man to consider, that notwithstanding all his pains and care, yet he must grow old in ignorance, and in most things shall know as little, as those that are idle

and foolish, *the secrets of wisdom being double to that which is*, as Zophar tells us in Job 11. 6.

Now this great *imperfection* of our knowledge will more distinctly appear, if we consider it under those several heads to which it is reducible, *namely*, the knowledge of *Words*, *Things*, *Times*, *Persons* and *Actions*.

1. That Learning which consists only in the form and pedagogy of Arts, or the *Critical* notions upon words and phrases, hath in it this intrinsical imperfection, that 'tis only so far to be esteemed, as it conduceth to the knowledge of *things*; being in it self but a kind of pedantry, apt to infect a man with such odd humours of Pride, and Affectation, and Curiosity, as will render him unfit for any great Employment. Words being but the images of matter; and to be wholly given up to the study of these, what is it but *Pygmalion's* phrenzy, to fall in love with a picture or image: As for *Ora-tory*, which is the best skill about words, that hath by some wise men been esteemed but a voluptuary Art, like to Cookery, which spoils whole-some

some meats, and helps unwholesome, by the variety of fauces, serving more to the pleasure of taste, than the health of the Body.

2. As for *real* knowlege, that is likewise exceeding imperfect; whether we look to the history of Nature, delivered down to us by the Ancients, which in many things is evidently false, and therefore to be suspected in others; or else to what the industry of these latter times hath discovered; men having not been so diligent and exact in their observations, as not to be deceived with casual and fortuitous events.

The frame of this great Universe as it is represented to humane consideration and enquiry, appearing like a perplexed Labyrinth, wherein there is so much ambiguity in the several ways, so much falacy in the similitude of things and signs, such obliqueness and intricacy in the course of Nature, that even sense it self, which in such things is our chiefest guide, is fain to wander up and down in uncertainties, and instead of leading us *out*, do's many times lead us *into* error. And for this reason, Philosophy hath been

*Vernam.
Pref. ad
Nov. Or.
gan.*

been so often questioned and subverted in the very principle of it.

3. As for History of *Times, Persons, Actions*; we have reason enough to suspect that they are generally written according to the *Author's* interests and prejudices, and do seldom contain an impartial and upright representation of truth.

I do not mention *Divinity*, though here our knowlege be most imperfect; nor hath this been wholly free from its changes and fashions, according to the course of times.

Now all this arises from the imperfection of our knowlege in these things, because *we see but in part, darkly; That which is wanting in any of them cannot be numbred.*

If any one should from hence object; That according to this, it were better for a man to be idle, ignorant, and cheerful, than to macerate himself with much reading. If every state of life hath its proper vexation, 'tis best to chuse that which hath least.

To this *Solomon* answers, That 'tis true, every condition is bad enough, yet some are better than others; *For wisdom excelleth folly, as much as light ex-*

excelleth darkness; and though it doth expose us to sorrow, yet this very sorrow is better than a careless sensual mirth, For *by sadness the heart is made better.* c. 7. 3.

If it be again objected, that 'tis not imaginable how the best things in the world should expose us to the worst mischiefs and troubles.

I answer, they are therefore the worst, because they spring from the corruption of the best, for *Corruptio optimi est pessima*, the more excellent any thing is in it self, the worse do's it prove when abused or corrupted.

I have been too long in the *Doctrinal* part, 'tis more than time that I hasten to the *Application*.

And here I shall not need to apologize for the suitableness of this discourse both to this Place and Time. Knowledge is here our business and profession, the great Merchandize that we deal in, and this solemnity is our chief *Mart*, wherein 'tis exposed to publick view, and ought to be after a more especial manner taught and learn'd. And therefore it cannot now be improper for us to be put in remembrance

brance of the many troubles and hazards we are exposed unto in this respect.

You have heard already how the greatest natural wisdom and knowledge, is not only short of, but likewise opposite unto, that rest and satisfaction of mind which we all pretend to seek after.

And therefore certainly it must needs follow as a most obvious and natural inference,

1. By way of *Instruction* or *Cauti*on, that we have no reason to be proud of, or to trust in that knowledge which we have already attained, or to pursue after more with so much heat and eagerness as to forget those practical duties which are most necessary.

2. By way of *Exhortation*, That we have great reason to apply our selves unto those means which may prevent or remove the sorrows and dangers to which these things of themselves will expose us. And that's the substance of what I have to say in the *Application*.

I. It

I. It may serve for *Instruction*, to acquaint us:

1. *That we have little reason to be proud of, or to trust in that knowlege we have already attained.* 'Tis true, it hath naturally a fermenting quality in it, being apt to swell and puff up; and 'tis an hard matter for a man that hath much Learning, not to have a *broad heart*, as the *Hebrew* phrase is, that is, a *proud heart*, as our Translation renders it, *Prov.* 21. 4. But yet if it be rightly considered, there can be no reason why any man should be proud of that wherein the Devil does excel him. And the truth is, knowing persons, of all others, have most cause to be humbled in the apprehension of their own ignorance and folly, of which they must needs be most sensible. And as for confidence in these things, they will be so far from assisting or relieving us in our greatest exigencies, that they will rather add to our trouble and danger. 'Tis not all the art of Reasoning or Rhetorick in the world that can deceive the Devil, or silence a guilty clamorous conscience; nay these things do usually help to aggravate such mens conditions, by
many

many dreadful apprehensions of that wrath and vengeance to which their sins do expose them. The damned souls could not suffer such exquisite torments, if in the state of separation they were not raised to a much higher degree of knowlege than here they are capable of. And as for that great business of a man's life, which doth most of all concern him, conversion and regeneration, *the wisdom of this world* is so far from helping us in this, that 'tis *enmity against God*. No men usually are such fierce and bitter opposers of the power of godliness, as those that have learned heads and unsanctified hearts: *Paul's* powerful preaching was never more fruitless than amongst the *Athenians*, whose learning was so far from shewing them the excellency, that it made them despise the simplicity of the Gospel. Our Saviour never met with more malicious opposition, than from the learned *Scribes* and *Pharises*; who did not only by open contempt resist his ministry, but also by secret practices undermine his person. And therefore in all these respects we have little reason either of pride or confidence in that know-

knowledge which any of us have already attained.

2. We have as little reason to be so eager in the pursuit after more, as to forget or neglect those practical duties which are most necessary. 'Tis true, knowledge is here the business of our particular Callings, as *Scholars*; in which 'tis our duty to be diligent, and our just commendation to be skilful. But yet there is somewhat else of greater concernment to us in our general Calling, as *Christians*, a demeanour and conversation suitable to this Profession; our failing in this will quickly bring a blemish upon the other. There have been of late great complaints (and too much occasion for them) of that contempt and reproach poured out upon men of our Calling; which though it may argue much folly and madness in those unreasonable men who are the Authors of it; yet perhaps there may be too much occasion given on our parts, for want of that holiness and zeal and prudence and gravity which should accompany our profession; besides that many of us do by our sloth and idleness, let other men outgo us in those very gifts and abilities,

ties, which are more peculiarly required to our Calling. Now I say, that which must promote both the usefulness and the reputation of our knowledge, is when our practice and conversation is made suitable to it. 'Tis not an ability to talk or to dispute of Religion; for in these times, what *man*, nay what *woman* almost is there who does not pretend to skill in this? But it is a holy and prudent conversation that must adorn our profession, and provoke others to the love of it. And there are stronger engagements upon us to this purpose, than upon any others. Because by our Callings we profess our selves to be amongst those servants, who do not only know, but are able to teach our Master's will, and therefore our disobedience shall be punished with *many stripes*.

It cannot be denied, but that skill in *Controversies*, the *Tongues*, *History*, *Philosophy*, the *Arts*, are all of them not only great ornaments and advantages to particular men, but in some sense also necessary for the Church; but yet when all is done, 'tis this practical *Divinity*, that must bring us to heaven, that must poise our judgments,

ments, and settle our consciences, and strengthen our comforts, and save our souls. This must be *our rejoicing at the last day, the testimony of our consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God we have had our conversations in this world.* ^{2 Cor. 1. 12.}

2. A second Use shall be for *exhortation*, that we would apply ourselves to those means which may help to remedy the sorrows and dangers to which those things of themselves will expose us.

There are divers things of excellent use in Physick, which yet cannot be safely prescribed without the addition of some correctives to abate their noxious qualities. Such is the condition of this natural wisdom and knowledge, which of themselves have many flatuous and corroding qualities; but yet being mixed with some proper correctives may be made of singular use and efficacy. But you will say, What are these other ingredients? Why the *Apostle* doth prescribe a large *recipe* of them, 2 Pet. 1. 5, 6. *Add to your knowlege, faith, virtue, temperance, patience, goodness, brotherly kindness, charity.* The mixture of these
 O other

other Christian Graces, will make our knowlege exceeding wholesome and useful. I must not insist upon the particulars; only there are *two* Graces amongst all the rest, which I cannot omit, being in Scripture-phrafe stiled by the name of *wisdom* and *knowlege*; and therefore of all others, the study of these must needs be the most proper remedies to be applied in this case: namely, 1. *Faith* in Christ. 2. *Fear* of God. These are properly the *graces*, the other but the *gifts* of wisdom and knowlege.

1. *Faith* is *wisdom* unto *salvation*; the *other* is but wisdom unto *grief*; this leads us unto a practical acquaintance with the Doctrine of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, in whom are laid up all the treasures of wisdom and knowlege. Those are but the refuse and the husk of knowlege, which are to be had amongst the Creatures, the *treasures* of it are only to be obtained by an acquaintance with the *virtue* of Christ's *death* and *resurrection*. Though a man should be very well skilled in the way of secular business, knowing how to bring about his own ends, to raise himself unto power, reputation, estate; yet such
an

an one is but a fool, if he be either ignorant, or careless, how to save his own soul. And therefore if we aim at true wisdom, we should make it our chief business *to grow in grace, and in this knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* St. Paul was a man of as great abilities as any that we read of, *bred up at the feet of Gamaliel*, very well versed in the chief Authors of his time, *Epimenides, Menander, Aratus*, whom he cites upon several occasions; of a very powerful and masculine Oratory, as may be seen by the effects of it, in his discourse with *Felix, Agrippa, Festus*, and the men of *Lystra*, who for this reason called him *Mercury*. And for his skill in Languages, *he spake with tongues more than they all*: And yet this learned man, notwithstanding all these great abilities, doth profess that he *desired to know nothing but Christ and him Crucified*, that is, nothing in comparison to that knowledge, or nothing but what might lead him to it, or further him in it, nay he *counts all things but loss for the excellency of this knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.*

1 Cor. 14.

Philip. 3. 8.

2. The second *Grace* I mentioned is, *the fear of God*; Job 28. 28. *The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.* This is that which *Solomon*, after all his other enquiries, does at last pitch upon as the only remedy against those anxieties of mind, which every thing else did expose him unto. And he sets down as the utmost result of all his experience, that whosoever would be truly happy, he must make it his chief business to keep up in his heart a holy awe and fear of the divine Majesty, and to apply himself with an humble conformity unto the will of God. This he makes the conclusion of his whole *Sermon*; and I shall shut up all with the same advice, If you will have your other enquiries and learning made useful and comfortable unto you, then, *fear God and keep his commandments*; for *this is the whole duty of man.*

The End of the sixth Sermon.

The

The Seventh Sermon.

PROV. IV. 7.

Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom.

AMongst that great variety of subjects which *Solomon* treats of, in this and his other moral discourses, there is none more frequently mentioned, or more largely insisted upon than this of *Wisdom*. He himself, when he was put to his choice, having preferred this before all other things, and being so very eminent above all other men, for his great abilities in this kind: He doth thereupon take all occasions to celebrate the praise of it, and to excite others to the love and study of it.

It is one of his *Proverbs* to this purpose, which I have now made choice

to speak of: Being a Subject amongst all others the most difficult to be treated of, partly for the abstruseness of it, and partly for the copiousness of it, being that which we are still to be learning all the days of our Lives. And therefore it is no easy matter, either to explain the nature, or contract the Doctrine of it within a narrow compass; which yet I shall endeavour to do with as much plainness and brevity as I can.

The Word here translated *Principal*, שרש is derived from a Root which signifies the *Head*. 'Tis frequently used to express the summity or top of any thing, the chief or most excellent part of it; the original or first: It may import a priority of time, or order, or cause, or dignity. The Word translated *Get*, signifies properly the acquiring such an interest and propriety as men have in their possessions, which they account their own, and which they enjoy for themselves.

The *Proposition* I would treat of from these words is this:

The

The attainment of true wisdom is that Prop.
which doth most of all deserve our care
and study.

In the prosecution of this, I shall endeavour, 1. To shew the *Nature* of *Wisdom*, what it is, and wherein it consists. 2. The *Necessity* of it, or the grounds of our obligation to it, from Scripture and Reason. 3. To apply this by some useful *inferences*.

I. To shew what *Wisdom* is, and wherein it consists: Which I would enlarge under these *four heads*.

1. The description of its *Nature* and causes.

2. The several *kinds* and distinctions of it.

3. The *properties* or effects that flow from it.

4. The *opposites* to it.

I. For the description of the *Nature* of *Wisdom*, this is by *Aristotle* said to be that intellectual *Virtue*, whereby we are directed in our manners and carriage, to make choice of the right Means in the prosecution of our true End. *Tully* describes it to be *ars vivendi*: And to the same purpose *Aquinas*, *Recta ratio agibilium*, the skill of demeaning a man's self aright in practical affairs.

affairs. And *Solomon* to the same purpose, *The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way*, Prov. 14. 8. It is the end of science or knowledge to furnish our minds with due conceptions concerning the nature of things in *general*, their differences, relations, dependencies, whether in themselves they are either true or false, good or evil; but to be able to give a true judgment of *particulars*, concerning what may be most fit and convenient, in that great variety of Cases, which we shall meet with in the practical affairs of life, this is properly the work of Wisdom and Prudence.

The *Philosophers* in their distribution of virtues have generally agreed upon *four*, which they call *cardinal*, because all the rest do turn upon them as upon their hinges.

These are *Prudence*, and universal *Justice*, and *Fortitude*, and *Temperance*: *Prudence* is that virtue whereby a man is enabled to judge of what is right and fitting to be done, according to variety of cases and circumstances. *Justice* is that inclination of mind, whereby a man is disposed and fixed to do in every business according

according to the Rules of right, and just as he ought. *Fortitude* is that virtue whereby he is inabled to resist and subdue all such difficulties as he may meet with in the performance of his duty on the *one* hand, upon the account of danger or fear. And *Temperance* is that virtue whereby he is inabled to overcome the temptations on the *other* hand, of pleasure and allurement. So that each of these virtues are of universal extent in all the affairs and conditions of life; and there are many particular Cases, all such as are of any importance, wherein every one of them is to be exercised. When a man shall stand in need of *Prudence* to direct him in what is fitting; and of *Justice* to incline him to do accordingly; and of *Fortitude* to resist those fears and discouragements which be put in his way; and of *Temperance* to overcome the temptations of allurement and pleasure, whereby he may be drawn aside and inticed.

The first of these, which I am now treating of, is *Wisdom* or *Prudence*, and it consists of these *three* parts:

I. A *Sagacity of judgment* to make a true estimate of 1. *Things*, 2. *Persons*, 3. *Times*, and 4. *Events*.

1. Of *Things*, and *actions*, according to the *nature* of them, whether they are *good* or *evil*, and according to their *degrees*, whether *Gnats* or *Camels*, *Moats* or *Beams*, *Mint* and *Cummin*, or the *weighty matters of the Law*.

2. Of *Persons*, according to their various tempers, interests, and inclinations. The *Philosopher* hath observed, that every man hath some *handle* in his disposition, which he that can take hold of, may thereby lead him about and persuade him to any thing: Nor can there be a more palpable folly than to use such courses in order to the persuading of men, as in their own natures are like to alienate and exasperate them, rather than to convince them.

3. Of *Times* and seasons; as to the fitness of them, a *wise mans heart discerneth both of time and judgment*, Eccl. 8. 5. That which at one time may be very useful and proper, may not prove so at another season.

4. Of

4. Of *Events*, as to the probability of them: *A wise man foresees the evil, and hides himself*: Again, he knows that things and persons are not to be judged of by their present state, but by their final issues, which he is able oft-times to foresee in their causes.

II. A *Presence of mind*, to obviate sudden accidents, that a man may not be daunted with a surprize, or unexpected emergency, but may have his wits about him, to make the best diversion and provision that such a case will admit of.

III. *Experience* and observation of the most usual and probable consequences of things, which being for the most part acquired upon many trials, and in long time, therefore is this Virtue of *Wisdom* commonly appropriated to old age, according to that in *Job*: *With the ancients is wisdom, and in length of days understanding*, 12. 12. But because a diligent observation of History is somewhat equivalent to this, the world being but a great Theatre, wherein the same parts are repeated and acted over again in several Ages, therefore this may be some help and sup-

supply where the other is wanting.

II. The second particular to be discussed is concerning the several *kinds* and distinctions of it. The Scripture takes notice of two general kinds of it : One that is a Grace or Virtue, the *other* that is not so.

1. The first of these is sometimes stiled, *The wisdom that is from above*, Jam. 3. 17. to shew its *original* and descent : *The wisdom of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 7. as the *Author* of it : *Wise unto Salvation*, as the *end* of it, 2 Tim. 3. 15. *Wise to that which is good*, as the proper *object* of it, Rom. 16. 29.

2. The *Opposite* to this is sometimes called, the wisdom from beneath, or *which descendeth not from above*, James 3. 15. but is *earthly, sensual, devilish*. *The wisdom of the flesh*, Rom. 8. 6, 7. *which is enmity against God*. *The wisdom of the world*, 1 Cor. 2. 6. *We speak not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world*, that is, 'tis not our business to instruct men in those subtilties of Philosophy, or arts of Policy, which pertain to these worldly affairs, for which other men are celebrated as princes, and famous in their generations ; *But we speak the wisdom*

wisdom of God in a mystery, as it follows in the next *verse*.

But besides this general distinction of *Wisdom* into *good* and *bad*, there is likewise another distribution of it according to the several *ends* which men propose to themselves, and the means whereby these several ends are to be attained. The common end which every man doth and must propose to himself by a natural necessity, is a state of happiness. But according to mens different apprehensions of this, and those several designs wherein they place their happiness, so may their wisdom be distributed. Now there are *three* kinds of things which men of several tempers do propose to themselves as their happiness, either, 1. The gratifying of their carnal appetites in enjoying of these worldly things. 2. In that peace and contentment of mind, which may be attained by the exercise of moral Virtues: Or, 3. In spiritual blessedness. According to which it is distinguished into these *three* kinds, *Carnal Policy, Moral prudence, Spiritual Wisdom.*

1. For *Carnal Policy*: The end of this is the satisfying of our sensual appetites ; either by luxury and pleasure, by gain and riches, or by honour, power and greatness in the world. Which the Apostle St. John , 1 Job. 2. 16. hath stiled *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*. Sensuality, Covetousness and Pride ; to which St. James hath appropriated the Epithetes of *sensual, earthly, devilish*, James 3. 15. The more weak and impotent any Creature is, of so much the more narrow designs must it be. 'Tis an argument of an infirm and little soul, when men are wholly immersed in themselves, and confined to the gratifying of their brutish appetites : Such persons are usually *sui amantes sine rivali*, as Cicero speaks ; great lovers of themselves, but without any rival or competitor : If they do attain their ends, they are of all others the most ignoble and despicable, a kind of impotent vermine amongst men ; and if they fail of their ends, nothing can be more vain or miserable. Now the end that such men propose to themselves being small and vile, and much
below

below the nobility of the humane nature, therefore no wonder if they are put to prosecute it by unworthy means, by secret underminings, crafty and fraudulent surprizals, destruction on the one hand, and base flattery and compliances on the other hand, all kind of courses, *per fas, & nefas, quocunque modo*, without any consideration of what is honest or just, if it seem but likely to promote their particular design.

When these worldly things are made our chief end, then all those arts and devices that are used about them, are but worldly policy, and devilish craft. But now when they are made a subordinate end, as they may, then the grace or virtue of wisdom, may be of great use in the prosecution of them.

2. *Moral prudence*: The end which this proposes to it self, is peace, quiet, safety as to our outward condition, contentment and joy as to our inward frame, and usefulness to those with whom we converse; and such a future state of happiness as the light of nature will inable men to believe and hope for

The

The *Means* for the attaining of this *end*, are the *Moral Virtues*: All those virtuous habits whereby we are enabled to moderate our passions, to subdue our corrupt inclinations, and to regulate our actions and carriage. Now though this be not the same thing with that we call *Divinity*, yet 'tis in the very next degree to it; if there had been no special Revelation from heaven, this had been the utmost felicity that we could have proposed to our selves, or that our natures had been capable of: And now that there is another way discovered to repair the defects of our lapsed condition, it doth not exclude *moral* honesty and prudence as things superfluous, but doth comprehend and take them in as a necessary part of Religion, without which a man cannot so much as pretend to grace and holiness; and where it stands alone separated from Christianity, how defective and insufficient soever it may be for the attainment of true blessedness, yet 'tis of it self of a very amiable nature, deserving love and commendation. 'Tis said of our *Saviour*, that he *loved* the young man in the

the Gospel upon this account: I do the rather mention this, because in the unwary expressions of some men, morality hath been sometimes declaimed against as if it were a vice. 'Tis a disparagement indeed to a man, who lives under the means of Grace, not to get above the morality of the Heathens; but 'tis a far greater disparagement for a man to pretend unto higher attainments, and yet to fall short of them in the practice of moral duties.

3. *Christian Wisdom*: The *end* which this proposeth is a state of eternal blessedness, consisting in reconciliation to God, and communion with him: The *means* for the attaining of this end, are the infused principles of grace, by which our corrupted natures are to be renewed and repaired to their primitive rectitude; *Faith* in a Mediator, together with an hearty, constant and universal submission to the Doctrine of the Gospel. Which is the *wisdom of God* whereby we are made *wise unto salvation*: So that *Christian Wisdom* may be defined to be that habit of mind whereby a man is enabled to propose the true end of

P

eternal

eternal blessedness, and to judge aright concerning such means as may be most fit for the attaining of this end, conforming his life and carriage accordingly.

This doth not abolish *human wisdom*, so far as we keep within due bounds, in the getting and enjoying these worldly things, much less *moral prudence*; but they may be both comprehended under it, as being subordinate and subservient to it. Only this hath upon all accounts the preheminance, as proposing the best end, chusing the most certain and infallible means. In these secular affairs the effect is not always tied to the means; *The battel is not to the strong, nor the race to the swift, but time and chance happen to them all.* There may happen some unexpected emergencies from undiscernable accidents, which may blast all our designs and most probable contrivances: Besides that in a long *series* and concatenation of designs, life it self may fail us, and *then all our thoughts perish.* Nor can moral virtue always attain that joy and contentment which it aims at, considering the many infirmities and
temp-

temptations we are liable unto. But now those graces and duties which are prescribed by Christian wisdom, are most certain and infallible, and never fail of their end.

III. The next thing to be spoken unto, is concerning the *proper effects* of Wisdom; the chief of which Solomon tells us is to *direct*, Eccles. 10. 10. *wisdom is profitable to direct*. And this it doth both as to the *end* and the *means*.

I. It directs to propose the right end, such as may be perfective of our natures, and suitable to the happiness of a spiritual immortal soul, *namely*, the fruition of the first and most supreme Being. That which is highest and greatest *in genere veri*, to gratify our understandings; and *in genere boni*, to satisfy our wills and affections. Any thing that is short of this, will not reach up to the nature of an end, *namely*, to the utmost perfection of our natures according to their kind. And for a man to mistake in his ultimate end, is the most fatal incurable folly that may be; not to be remedied by any possible artifice or diligence to be

used about the *means* : All which will but help to promote and increase the first error.

2. It directs to consult about the means: This the *Philosopher* calls, *Ἀβελία*, which consists in a judicious investigation about the several ways, and a choice of such as are more proper to the end we propose. There are these *two* qualifications requisite unto all such means as are consistent with true wisdom: 1. They must be *fit* and accommodate to the end. And 2. They must be *honest* and lawful in themselves: A defect in either of these will expose men to the censure of *folly*, or of *fraud*. And there are *two* things which every wise man should propose to himself in the management of his affairs, *success* and *safety*. The making of some advance and progress in his main design; and the securing himself from such dangers as he may meet with. In order to which there are *four* conditions to be observed, as being highly subservient to the due manner of contriving and executing of things. These are:

1. *Forecast* and providence against want.

2. *Wariness* and caution against danger.

3. *Order* and *Union* against opposition.

4. *Sedulity* and diligence against difficulties.

Which *four* qualifications seem to me to be recommended by *Solomon*, *Prov.* 30. 24. Where he tells us, that there be *four things*, which are *little upon the earth*, but they are exceeding wise, *sapientiora sapientibus*. The *Ants* are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer. The *Conies* are but a feeble folk: Some read this Word *mures montani*, the *Mice*, which for their smalness seems more agreeable to those other examples with which they are joyned. These are but a feeble folk, yet they make their houses in the Rock. The *Locusts* have no King, yet go they forth all of them by bands. The *Spider* takes hold with her hands, and is in Kings Palaces.

Interpreters do very much vary in their expositions of this place: Some would have it to refer to *four* kinds of necessary things to be acquired by wisdom. 1. *Food* and sustenance, in the example of the *Ant*. 2. *Safe habitation*, in the instance of the *Mice*. 3. *Power*, in the example of the *Locusts*. 4. *Honour*, by that instance of the *Spider*. Implying, that there is no person so mean and impotent, but by wisdom may provide for his own, 1. *Necessary subsistence*, if he takes the right opportunity. Gathering in summer, working whilst it is day, before the night comes when no man can work. And 2. For his *safe habitation*, by building upon a *Rock*, *Matth.* 7. Getting a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens, 2 *Cor.* 5. And 3. For his *Power*, by joyning himself in *society*, and observing the *Laws* of it. And lastly, for *Honour*, by his *Sedulity* and diligence in opposing all the difficulties that he meets with.

Others conceive these words to refer to those several kinds of wisdom, which belong to these four conditions or states of life. 1. That of the *Countryman* or *Husbandman*, represented

sented by the *Ant*, who lives in the field, and gathers in the harvest. 2. That of the *Citizens*, by the *Mice*, whose habitation is in the Rocks. 3. That of the *Soldier*, by the *Locusts*, who go forth in bands. 4. That of the *Courtier*, by the *Spider*, who lives in Kings Palaces.

There are several other conjectures about the meaning of the *Wiseman* in these examples, which I shall not now mention. Only 'tis observable, that the instances here made use of, are of such Creatures as, besides their own littleness and weakness, are withal of no kind of benefit to human life, either as to clothing, or food, or physick, but rather noxious and hurtful to men; but what they want in usefulness as to these particulars, they may supply by their teaching us wisdom.

1. The *Ant* prepares his meat in the summer; thereby teaching and instructing us in that part of wisdom, which concerns providence and forecast against future want.

2. The *Conies*, or as it may be more properly rendred, the *Mice*, which are *but a feeble folk*, build their houses in the Rock; and not being able to make any opposition or resistance against their enemies, they use their best wariness and caution for the avoiding of them, and place their security in the inaccessibleness of their habitation.

3. The *Locusts* go forth by bands: Though the *Locust* of it self be a most impotent Creature, easily swept away or trodden under foot, yet are they safe upon account of their numbers, and most formidable in their troops, wasting whole Countries before them; so that no kind of opposition or resistance can prevail against them.

4. The *Spider* takes hold with her hands, and is in Kings palaces. Though such places be most frequented by company, and kept most neat and elegant, the Spiders web being often destroyed and swept down, yet by her unwearied diligence and indefatigable industry, she renews it again, being ready to repeat over her former labours, without despondency, as often

often as her losses and necessities require ; and by that means gets and continues an habitation in palaces.

IV. The *fourth* thing I proposed to speak to, was the *Opposites* to this virtue of wisdom, whether by way of excess, *Craft* ; or by way of *Defect*, *Folly*.

I. The *Redundant* extream of it is *Craft*, guile, a fraudulent subtilty, which may properly be stiled a being over-wise, *i. e.* wiser than the Rule ; as if by this a man were able to find out shorter ways than the lawful road, breaking over hedge and ditch and all legal bounds, as if this were the most expedite way to arrive at our journeys end. This is that which the *Serpent* is said to be eminent for, above all other *beasts of the field*, Gen. 3. Whence it is usually called a kind of crooked serpentine wisdom, consisting in an ability of surprizing and putting tricks upon others, lying always upon the catch, and dealing by way of stratagem ; which is allowable only in a state of War against professed declared enemies, and where matters depend upon sudden actions ; and yet even in such cases
this

this way of Craft will by a noble and generous enemy be avoided as much as may be : But in our ordinary carriage to make use of it, towards such to whom we profess amity and fair dealing, is exceeding unworthy, and will make a man suspected by every one with whom he converseth, as a dangerous person.

2. The *Deficient* extream of Wisdom is called *Folly*, or simpleness; which consists in such a vicious habit as is acquired by the frequent neglect or rejection of the ways of wisdom. And this is properly both a sin and a punishment. This peculiar dishonour belonging to it, amongst all other vices, that whereas some men have been so impudent, as to boast and take a pride in their dishonest actions; yet there is no person to be found so wretched, as to brag of his Folly. This being amongst all men counted most reproachful, and that which will render one most contemptible.

Thus much for the *first* thing I proposed, concerning the *Nature* of Wisdom. I proceed to the *second*, concerning the *Necessity* of it, or the grounds

grounds of our obligation to it, both from *Scripture* and *Reason*.

The *Scripture* proofs to this purpose may be reduced to these *two* Heads; the *precepts* for it, the *commendations* of it.

1. The *Precepts* for it, are very frequent in *Scripture*, especially in this Book, v. 5. of this Chapter. *Get wisdom, get understanding, and forget it not.* So chap. 7. 4. *Say unto wisdom, thou art my Sister, and to understanding, thou art my Kinswoman.* That is, grow into such an intimate relation and familiar acquaintance with it, as persons usually have with such as are of the same consanguinity. *Dig for her as for Silver, and search for her as for hid treasure.* Count no labour too much, that may further you in this enquiry. In the New Testament we are commanded to be *wise as Serpents*; to be *wise unto that which is good*; to walk *wisely to them that are without*; to demean our selves amidst all the difficulties and temptations we shall meet with in the world, with much caution and circumspection, *not as fools but as wise*, Ephes. 5. 15.

Prov. 2. 4.

Matth. 10.

Colos. 4. 5.

2. The

The Seventh Sermon,

2. The *Commendations* that are given in Scripture to this virtue, are so very numerous, that 'tis very hard to speak briefly of them. There are *four* things which are usually of greatest value and esteem amongst men, *Riches*, and *Honour*, and *Pleasure*, and *Life*. And when the Scripture would set forth the commendation of any thing, it doth frequently compare it with, and prefer it before, some of these things. 'Tis so in the present subject.

1. 'Tis better than *Riches*, Job 28. 16. *Wisdom cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious Onyx, or the Saphyr. The Gold and the Crystal cannot equal it. And the exchange of it shall not be for Jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of Coral or Pearls, for the price of wisdom is above Rubies, the Topaz of Æthiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.*

2. It is it self the greatest *Honour*, and will be a means to advance a man in the esteem of others. *It makes a man's face to shine, and the boldness of*
of

of his face shall be changed, Eccles. 8. 1.
 It multiplies the strength of his face, as
 the *Original* words may signify. It gives
 a lustre to a person, whereby he con-
 tracts love and reverence from all that
 know him. *Good understanding giveth*
favour, Prov. 13. 15. that is, renders a
 man amiable and acceptable to others.
The wise shall inherit glory, Prov. 3.

3. Wisdom is the truest and the
 best *Pleasure*. Filling the heart with joy,
 and the conscience with peace. *Her*
ways are ways of pleasantness, and all
her paths are peace, Prov. 3. 17.
Wisdom excelleth folly, as much as light
excelleth darkness. Now light is sweet,
and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to
behold the sun, Eccles. 11. 7. 'Tis not an
 easy matter to describe what great plea-
 sure and satisfaction it is, for a man to
 stand upon the advantage-ground of wis-
 dom and experience, and to look down
 upon the mists and errors and wandrings
 which those are subject to who walk in
 the vale below.

4. Wisdom is as our *life*: *Length*
of days is in her right hand, Prov. 3.
16. She is a tree of life to them that
lay

lay hold upon her, v. 18. *Whoso findeth me, findeth life, and he shall obtain favour of the Lord; but he that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul. All they that hate me, love death*, chap. 8. 35. The Scripture doth abound in several other expressions to the same purpose, which I have not now time to mention.

2. As to the principles of *Reason*, it may be made very evident, that *Wisdom* is necessary to the *safety* of our *persons*, and to the *success* of our *Actions*.

1. 'Tis necessary to the *safety* of our *persons*; for the preventing and subduing all those difficulties and oppositions and dangers that we shall meet with. *Discretion shall preserve thee, and understanding shall keep thee, to deliver thee from the way of the evil man*, Prov. 2. 11. *It shall teach thee to walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble*, chap. 3. 23. Our *Saviour* having sent forth his *Disciples* as *sheep in the midst of wolves*, bids them be *wise as serpents, and innocent as doves*. Innocence must secure them against any legal punishment, or the sufferings
under

under just government; and wisdom must protect them against irregular violence, and the injustice of others: Teaching them how to escape the snare, and prevent the surprizals of such as watch for advantage against them.

2. 'Tis necessary to the *management* of our *affairs* with success: That which on our parts is required to the success of any business, is an ability to *contrive* and to *execute*; and this wisdom only can enable us for.

1. For the *first*, *Solomon* tells us, that *a wise man's eyes are in his head*, Eccles. 2. 14. where they may best serve him to look round about him, to discover the distance and relations of things, and what is the shortest way of passing from one affair to another. Such an one can see afar off: And though future matters be, for the most part, but as a dark empty space, which is alike invisible to him that is blind, and to him that sees; yet a prudent man hath some advantage in this respect, being able in some cases in a good measure to foresee events

The Seventh Sermon,

events in their causes, and accordingly to provide for them.

2. And as wisdom doth thus fit a man for *contrivance*, by the right situation of the *eye*, the organ of seeing; so likewise doth it for *execution*, by the right qualification of the *hand*, the instrument of *action*. *A wise man's heart is at his right hand, Eccles. 10. 2.* The most useful part for employment. He goes readily and wisely to work, performs things with dexterity and fitness, according to the most decent order: Whereas *the heart of the fool is at his left hand*, that is, he goes about things awkwardly, not with that dexterity and strength as he should. Now businesses thus managed, are usually attended with success; nor is there any thing to be further done on our parts to make any action prosperous. *Nullum Numen abest si sit prudentia*: There is for the most part a blessing from heaven upon undertakings that are wisely contrived and managed.

In brief, *Wisdom* is necessary to our *Obedience*: A man may have good affections, and be inclined to do that which is right, but he will not be able to act accordingly, and to do honest things, without some measure of prudence to judge of particular cases. 'Tis this that must preserve our minds from error, our hearts from corruption, our lives from sin, our persons from shame and danger; that must fit us for every condition, teaching us *how to want, and how to abound*; that must render all our gifts and abilities useful. Such persons as are much below others, as to *Learning, Art, Wit, Diligence, Riches, Power*, yet by this virtue of *Prudence* may prove much more serviceable to God and his Church, more useful in their generations, than those who do much exceed them in all these other respects. From all which it may appear, that there is sufficient reason to infer the *necessity* of this grace of *Wisdom*.

There remains only one *Enquiry* or *Objection* to be briefly stated and answered, and I shall proceed to *Application*.

Q

May

Obj.

May not this be said to be a *gift* and a privilege, rather than a *duty*; and the want of it, a *defect* or unhappiness, rather than a *sin*? Every man is not bound to be eloquent, learned, beautiful, witty, strong. These are blessings and gifts which depend upon our natural abilities, leisure, education, experience, some of which are not in our power, and therefore not to be imposed as duties, as if there were sin and guilt in being without them; and why may not the same be said of Wisdom?

Ans.

To this *two* things may be answered. 1. That *Christian* wisdom, for the nature and *substance* of it, is a *duty*; for the *degrees*, a *gift*. Every Christian though of the lowest form is supposed to have the prudence of a *Disciple* and of *submission*, though not of a *Teacher* and of *conduct*. He may have a sufficient ability, both to understand and to make a right use of those means, which are necessary to his chief end, namely eternal blessedness. And 2. As for *moral* and *civil* prudence, whereby a man is to conduct himself in the ordinary affairs of life: This likewise is, as to the substance of it, a duty,

duty, which all men are obliged unto in some measure, according as their capacities, conditions, and opportunities may require; though not all alike in the same kinds, or the same degree. 'Tis no culpable defect in a private man, that he is without the art of government, any more than it is in an Husbandman or Tradesman, to be destitute of skill in Military and Naval matters, which are things of another kind. A private soldier is not obliged to have the prudence of a General; nor is it to be expected that every one who can govern a Family, should be able to govern a City. But when a man is called from a private to a publick station, he is then by virtue of this Call, under an obligation of labouring after all those endowments and abilities, whereby he may fill up and adorn his employment. The neglect of such abilities as are suitable to a man's station, is not only a *defect*, but a *fault*.

I have now done with the *Doctrinal* part: I shall be very brief in the *Application*; wherein I shall touch at three *Inferences*.

Q 2

1. From

1. From the nature of Wisdom, as it hath been described, it will follow, that no wicked man can be truly wise; because such men mistake in their chief end, preferring earth before heaven, transient momentary things before those of everlasting concernment; than which there cannot be a more monstrous folly. And they mistake likewise in the honesty and fitness of the means, by reason of their disability to *discern betwixt things that differ*, and to *approve those that are more excellent*. They may have good wits, a quickness and vivacity of fancy, and yet be far from being wise. 'Tis a Proverbial saying, That some men have good wits, if wise men had them in keeping. When these two are separated, the former of them doth many times prove a prejudice and an occasion of mischief, and 'twere better for such persons to wear wooden daggers, than those of steel.

They may have much humane learning. But great Clerks are not always wise men. *Athens* and *Corinth* were for their knowledge called the *two eyes of the world*; as *Rome* and *Carthage* were

were for their military strength, the two Arms of it. And yet the Apostle stiles those of Corinth, fools, 1 Cor. I. 20. God hath made foolish the wisdom of the wise. And elsewhere speaking of the Græcian Philosophers, he says, whilst they profess'd themselves to be wise, they became fools.

They may have some skill in the Scriptures, as the Jewish Doctors had, whom yet our Saviour calls fools: yea, fools and blind, Matth. 23. 17.

They may have the art of bringing about their secular designs, growing great and rich, and yet deserve no better a title than that laborious Rich man in the Gospel, whom our Saviour calls fool for his pains, Luke 12. 20.

And lastly, they may likewise have some measure of moral uprightness, keeping themselves unspotted from the pollutions of the world; and upon that account may be called Virgins, but without true Religion and Holiness, they are but foolish Virgins, and such as shall miss of their end, Matth. 25. 1.

2. Hence it will follow, that grace and holiness is the truest wisdom. He that is truly religious (whatever

Job 28. 28.
Psal. 111.
10.

other accomplishments he may want) he is truly wise. *Behold, the fear of the Lord that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding*: Therefore keep his statutes, for this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the Nations, Deut. 4. 6. A good man is in Scripture-pharse stiled, *the man of wisdom*, Micah 6. 9. And conversion, *a being turned to the wisdom of the just*, Luke 1. 17. And on the other side, all kind of Sin is in the usual Scripture-pharse called by the name of folly. Now 'tis no small advantage to such as are truly religious, that whatever they may be destitute of as to these worldly matters, yet they have *the principal thing*, namely, *wisdom*.

3. And lastly, if *wisdom be the principal thing*, then let it be our principal endeavour to attain it; and *above all other gettings, let us labour to get understanding*. Nothing can be more reasonable, than that our love and zeal toward any thing, should be proportioned to the excellency of it. In order to which we should carefully apply our selves to all those good means, whereby wisdom is to be attained.

As

As for that kind of Prudence which is requisite to the management of secular business, this depends upon some natural abilities, as sagacity of judgment, quickness and presence of mind, together with the advantage of long experience, and therefore is not to be taught and learnt as other Arts and Sciences may.

We have Schools for *Logick*, *Rhetorick*, *Mathematicks*, *Philosophy*, but none to teach men wisdom and discretion. And the reason is, because this cannot (by reason of the infinite variety of cases) be comprehended under any certain rules; or if it could, yet all the *Maxims* that can be prescribed of this nature will be but as a workman's tools, which though never so good in themselves, yet without skill in the Artift will never make good work: and for a man to think that he may be able in this respect to act wisely by any certain Rules or Maxims prescribed him, is all one as to imagine that the tools of some excellent Artificer should (though in the hands of a bungler) be able to produce good work.

But now on the other hand, that kind of Christian Wisdom, which we are obliged unto as our principal duty, and whereby we are to be made *wise unto Salvation*: This is subject to certain rules and means for the attaining of it. Which in the general are, keeping the Commandments, submitting to the doctrine of the Gospel; and in order to this, *attending at the gates of wisdom, receiving instruction with all readiness, biding the Law in our hearts, continually meditating upon it; furnishing our minds with right principles, that 'tis better to suffer than to sin, to have a good conscience than a great estate; that these things which are seen, are but temporal, Scenes and Pageantry, false pleasures, and but for a season, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

More particularly; 1. *The conversing with good company: He that walks with the wise shall be wise, Prov. 13. 20.* 2. *Humility, which is a grace that will render a man teachable: The meek will be guide in judgment and teach his way.* 3. *Praying for it: If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, James 1. 5. 'Tis he that gives wisdom*

wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to *Dem. 2. 21.*
them that know understanding. And
therefore to him it is that we must
apply our selves for wise and under-
standing hearts, beseeching him that
he would first direct us by his counsel,
assist us by his grace, and then bring us
to glory.

The End of the Seventh Sermon.

The

The Eighth Sermon.

PROV. XIII. 20.

*He that walketh with wise men shall be
wise, but a companion of fools shall
be destroyed.*

THIS Book of the *Proverbs* is a Miscellany of Sentences, full of various and profound wisdom, both with regard to things *civil* and *sacred*. It concerns all kind of matters, the customs, vices, humours of men; the duties and business of life; the government and events of providence. The principal rules and observations concerning these, are here set down in plain and pithy Sentences: And though some of them may at first glance perhaps seem to be but obvious and flat, yet upon a nearer and more considerate view,

view, they will all of them be found to be (as they are stiled) דברי רשע, *ruling speeches*, such as are fit to have a special authority over a man, in the guidance of his affairs.

The Text concerns that great advantage or prejudice which will follow upon the choice of those companions with whom we do most familiarly converse.

Society is in it self so necessary to humane life, that the Philosopher doth from thence define a Man to be ζῷον πολιτικόν, *a sociable creature*; as if this were one main property and end of humane nature. *Quæcunque vaga nascuntur & actura vitam segregem, armata sunt, hominem imbecillitas cingit*, saith the Stoick. *Other creatures which are intended for wandering and solitude, are naturally armed for their defence, whereas man is born the weakest and most helpless of all things, having only these two advantages for his protection, Society and Reason.*

Sen. Benef.
lib. 4. c. 18.

But now because the chief benefit of this is not always to be attained in a common relation to a publick Body, without the more private and intimate league of friendship; a crowd
is

is not company ; *magna civitas* may be *magna solitudo*, therefore the want of friends may in some sense be called *solitude*, and so disadvantageous to the well-being and comfort of life, *ut solem è mundo videantur tollere, qui amicitiam de vita humana*, (as the Roman Orator speaks) that we had as good lose the *sun out of the firmament*, as friendship from amongst men. Cicero.

It hath been observed, that the wisest and greatest Monarchs that ever were, in the midst of all their other enjoyments, could not think themselves happy without this. And though the distance of their condition, might seem to debar them from this privilege, which requires an equal; yet rather than want a friend, they have descended to some of their subjects, making them to be *participes curarum*, though not without great inconveniences and hazards from the people. Such a high rate have they put upon this privilege of friendship.

Adam in the state of innocence, could not be happy, though in *Paradise*, without a companion.

Our

Our Saviour himself, who for our sakes was content to forgo the usual pleasures and contentments of life, yet would not be without this necessary refreshment of an intimate friend, but rather chose to admit one of his servants unto this near relation, *the disciple whom he loved.*

The Wiseman having observed this great necessity of friendship and society, and of what high importance it is to be right in the choice of them, he doth in this Book scatter up and down diverse Proverbial sayings for our direction about it. Amongst these the *Text* is one.

For the manner of it, 'tis put by way of *Antithesis* or opposition, betwixt *good* and *bad* company, under the name of *wise* and *foolish*; together with the several consequences which will follow upon such conversation. The one shall grow *wise*, the other *shall be destroyed*; wherein there is implied a double issue or event, that being twice to be understood which is but once spoken; it being all one as if he should have said, *he that walketh with the wise shall be wise and prosperous, but a companion of fools shall be foolish and miserable.*

The

The *Terms* have little of difficulty in them.

He that walketh. By walking with or being a companion, is not meant every casual commerce or negotiation with others; For he that in this sense would wholly avoid wicked men, *must needs go out of the world*, 1 Cor. 5. 10. But those phrases do signify a more familiar and intimate converse.

With the wise. All mankind is in the usual Scripture-phrase, especially in the Writings of *David* and *Solomon*, distributed under these two heads, of *wise* and *foolish*, that is, good or bad: Wisdom being that which enables a man to make choice of the right means for the attaining of the right end, and only those that are religious being enabled for this, in reference to the chief end of a man's eternal happiness, therefore they alone are said to be wise. *A companion of fools shall be destroyed*, רעה פסלים ירוע. The Word translated *destroyed*, is derivable either from one root, which signifies to grow worse, or else from another which signifies to be broken and ruined; and is fitly chosen out to comprehend both senses. Besides, that it has an elegant

The Eighth Sermon,

elegant allusion by way of *Paranomasia* unto the former word רעה, companion.

The chief scope of the *Text* may be summed up in this *Observation*.

That every mans present and future well-fare, doth very much depend upon the right choice and improvement of those friends or companions with whom he doth most familiarly converse.

If with such as are good, he shall be wise and happy; if with wicked persons he shall prove foolish for the present, and miserable for the future.

So that the subject I am to treat of is very proper and suitable to this Place, which being chiefly intended for education, unto which the company and friends that men make choice of doth so much contribute; therefore it can never be unseasonable here to put them in remembrance, or to stir them up to their duties in this respect.

For the clearing of this *Observation*, it may be made very evident from diverse Scriptures:

Upon

Upon this account it is, that we have such frequent cautions and threats against conversing with bad company. This was the meaning of all those severe prohibitions in the ceremonial Law, against *touching of any unclean thing*; which in the morality of it (say the *Ancient Fathers* and other *Interpreters*) doth signify that exact care which we ought to have against all such company whereby we may contract any inward pollutions.

'Tis observable, that he who touched a dead beast, was unclean but *till the evening*, *Levit. 11. 24.* But he who touched a dead man was unclean for *seven days*, *Numb. 19. 11.* signifying a bad man to be the most dangerous of all other Creatures. For that this in Scripture-phrase is meant by a *dead man*, may be sufficiently explained by that expression of the *Apostle*, where he styles wicked men to be such as are *dead in trespasses and sins*, *Ephes. 2. 1.* even whilst they live, *1 Tim. 5. 6.* And elsewhere they are said to be *whited sepulchers*, which may appear beautiful outwardly, but *within* ~~are~~ full of *dead mens bones, and all uncleanness*, *Matth. 23. 27.*

R

That's

That's a very sharp and elegant reprehension which the Prophet uses towards *Jehosaphat*, in reference to his association with *Abab*, 2 Chron. 19. 2. *Shouldst thou love them that hate the Lord?* He puts it by way of question, to shew the inexcusable inconsistency of those mens actions who pretend to love God, and yet will be friends to those that hate him.

Prov. 22. 24. Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go, lest thou learn his ways. And because some might be apt to think that they could converse with bad men without any such danger, therefore 'tis further added, *lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.* Implying, that though a man be very wary to avoid the corruption of bad company, yet it may insensibly steal upon him, and surprize him as a snare.

There are divers the like Precepts in the *New Testament*, 2 Tim. 3. The Apostle having recited a long Catalogue of vitious persons, *despisers of those that are good, heady, high-minded, having a form, &c.* adds this clause at the end of it, *from such turn away;* that

that is, avoid as much as may be all converse with them. And there is a solemn adjuration, *2 Thes. 3. 6.* Now we command you, Brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you will draw your selves from every brother that walketh disorderly. That place doth not so properly signify exclusion à sacris, but from familiar converse.

Psal. 15. 4. 'Tis set down as a special mark and evidence of such as shall be saved, in whose eyes a vile person is contemned, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord.

And holy David is very frequent in the proof of his integrity, and consequently of his happy condition from this sign, by his dislike of wicked company, and his love to those that are good.

Psal. 26. 4, 5. I have not sate with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil-doers, and will not sit with the wicked. *Psal. 101. 4.* I will not know a wicked person. *Ver. 5.* Whoso privily slandereth his Neighbour, will I cut off; him that hath a high look and proud heart, will I not suffer. *Psal. 139. 21.* Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and

am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred, and count them mine enemies. Psal. 120. 5. He bemoans his unhappiness that he was forced to dwell in Meshec, and to have his habitation in the tents of Kedar, that is, amongst such ungodly and cruel men as those of that Country.

And so on the other side, he professes that his *delight was in the saints, and to the excellent of the earth*, Psal. 16. 3. *Mine eye shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me*, Psal. 101. 6. *I am a companion for all those that fear thee, and keep thy precepts*, Psal. 119. 63. It were easy to cite abundance of other *Scriptures* to this purpose.

And there is very good *reason*, why the nature of a man's friends or company should be looked upon as of such great consequence to his well-being: Because they have such a special influence, not only upon a man's temper and manners, but upon all his chief concerns.

There are *four* things wherein most men place their well-fare, some or all of which every rational man doth pro-

propose to himself in the choice of his friends. These are *reputation, safety, comfort, profit*. Now each of these is only attainable by conversing with those that are good.

1. For *reputation* or honour: Wicked men are *fools* in the phrase of the *Text*; and what credit can a wise man expect by conversing with fools? They are stiled *beasts* in Scripture, *dogs, and swine, and vipers*; And 'tis the lowest most ignoble condition that our humane natures can be deprest to, with *Nebuchadnezzar* to converse with *beasts*. *Job* doth make it his great grief and complaint, *I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to ostriches*, *Job* 30. 29. They are *dead men* in the Scripture-phrase, and *what should the living do amongst the dead*: They are *whited sepulchers that are full of rottenness*, and none but a *mad man*, one that is possessed with a Devil, *will live among tombs*. Dan. 4. 32.

On the other side, good men are the *excellent of the earth* Such alone are truly noble and magnanimous, though not in outward respects, yet in regard of intrinsecal value, which can only put a true worth upon a man. Luke 24. 5.
Matth. 23. 27.
Psal. 16. 3.

man. So the righteous is always more excellent than his neighbour. Job upon the dunghill, and Jeremiah in the mire, had more real worth in them, than any of the greatest men of the world in the midst of all their pomp and glory. The Saints of old, when in their most despicable condition, *wandering about in sheep-skins and goats-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented*, were in themselves of so noble and inestimable a value, that, in the judgment of the Holy Ghost, *the world was not worthy of them*. These are they that have the highest relations, they are the children of God, heirs of a kingdom, the spouse, the members of Christ: And therefore whoever would propose to himself honour and reputation in his society, must make choice only of such companions.

2. For safety; The Text tells us, that a companion of fools shall be destroyed. Good men may be sometimes involved in the punishments of bad company, and perish in their sins: Rev. 18. 4. *Come out of her, my people, lest you receive of her plagues*. That's a known story of St. John, who durst not stay in the same Bath where

Ge.

Cerintus the Heretick was, for fear he might be surprized with some sudden judgment. Wicked men are infected, leproous persons; and who can converse with such without danger? If any one shall persuade himself that he can enjoy their company, and yet escape their contagion; he may as well think to suspend the natural operation of fire; *Can any one think to take coals in his bosom, and not be burned? Or can a man walk barefoot upon burning coals, and yet not hurt himself?* Prov. 6. 28. The conversing with bad company hath as unavoidable and powerful an efficacy as these natural agents which work necessarily, whose operations cannot be suspended: Or if any should possibly so far escape, as not to be *burnt with the fire* of bad company, yet he must needs be *blackened with their smoak*, which every prudent Christian will be careful to avoid.

Whereas on the other side, every one fares the better for the company of those that are good. They are the *lights of the world, the salt of the earth, the pillars of a nation*, those that *stand in the gap* to prevent an inundation of judgment. The place

is the safer for them where they live. *Ten righteous persons* may sometimes be enough to save a whole City from temporal ruine. *Potiphar's* house was blessed for *Joseph's* sake, *Gen.* 39. 5. and all the passengers in the ship were saved from drowning for *St. Paul's* sake, *Acts* 27. 24. And if their cohabitation or common neighbourhood may be so advantageous, what is it then to be leagued unto them by a nearer and more intimate tye of friendship?

3. For *comfort*: This is one of the principal ends of friendship, to ease and refresh a man amidst the anxieties of life; and there is nothing of greater efficacy to this purpose. *How pleasant is it for brethren to live together in unity!* *Quantum bonum est ubi sunt præparata pectora, in quæ tutò secretum omne descendat, quorum sermo solitudines leniat, sententia consilium expediat, hilaritas tristitiam dissipet, conspectus ipse delectet?* What a great comfort and privilege is it to have another self to whom a man may freely communicate all his secret troubles; whose conference may help to assuage our cares, whose counsel to expedite our diffi-

Psal. 133.

3.

Seneca de

Tranq. c.7.

difficulties, whose cheerfulness to dissipate our sadness, whose very look and presence doth delight? *As oylment and perfumes rejoyce the heart, so doth the sweetness of a man's friend,* Prov. 27. 9.

But now this cannot be expected from any wicked person. There is such an utter inconsistency and opposition betwixt good and bad, that there cannot be any communion or harmony betwixt them: For *what communion hath light with darknes?* 2 Cor. 6. 14. Speaking of those who are unequally yoked; *An unjust man is an abomination to the just, and he that is upright in the way, is an abomination to the wicked,* Prov. 29. 27: There is a natural enmity betwixt them, being of opposite principles and ways.

How is it possible for a man that hath any love or zeal for God, to delight in those by whom He is continually dishonoured and provoked? Instead of any refreshment by such company (if a man have *David's* temper) it will still administer new occasion of trouble and sorrow. *I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved. Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because men* keep

Psal. 119.
136, 158.

keep not thy laws. No man can delight in those that despise and reproach him. Why now a holy man looks upon all rebellions against God, as being indignities against himself, *Psal. 69. 9. The reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me.*

Whereas on the other side: Those that are *wise* in the phrase of the Text, are the most delightful company that are. *Wisdom makes a man's face to shine,* puts a splendor and amiableness upon a person: And for this reason, the communion of Saints is to be esteemed one of the greatest comforts and privileges that we are capable of in this world. 'Tis a kind of *excommunication* to be debarred of such company; and it shall be a great part of our joy and happiness in Heaven, that we shall there converse with the *spirits of just men made perfect.*

4. And lastly, for *Profit*: The most usual reason of men's friendship in the world, is the hopes they have of getting by one another: though this in it self is mercenary and poor, *arva enim & pecudes isto modo diligantur*, Men love their cattel and their land upon this account; they should love their friends from an higher

higher principle. But yet, if any should look for this, 'tis not to be had from those that are bad: There is nothing to be expected from such friends, but the increase of our sins and of our punishments: *The best of them is a brier and a thorn*, which may pull off our fleece, deprive us of our defence and our innocence; take from us what we have, but can contribute nothing: Or if we should get some outward advantage by them, yet we shall get partnership in their guilt, by that approbation which we seem to give to them in our conversing with them. We may harden them in their impenitency, blemish our profession; and what outward gain can be sufficient compensation for such damages?

Whereas in conversing with those that are good, there are these advantages. 1. Their example will by degrees insinuate into the mind, and obtain the force of precepts, exciting us to a holy emulation. 2. Their very presence will affect us with some kind of awe against evil. *Est aliquid quod ex magno viro vel tacente proficias.* 3. Their conference, wholesome and savory,

ad-

administring grace to the bearers. 4. Their counsel, faithful, and wise, and hearty. 5. Their prayers, powerful, ready. And 'tis not easily imaginable, what an advantage that is, to have a praying-friend or companion. We esteem it a great privilege to have a friend at Court, who is able to further us in our business and petitions, to have any special interest in a favourite; why, every good man hath *power with God*, and can prevail with him.

But I have stay'd too long in the Doctrinal parts of this Discourse.

There are three lessons I would briefly insift upon in the *Application* of it.

1. That we would take notice of the great benefit to be obtained by the right improvement of society and mutual converse with one another.

2. That we of this place would be careful, both for our selves and those committed to our charge, in the right choice of our friends and company.

3. That we would labour for those proper Qualifications and Abilities which may render us acceptable and useful in our conversing with others.

1. For the *first*, that we would take notice of the great benefit to be obtain'd
by

by Society. One chief reason why in these Places men do not make so great a progress either in piety or learning as might be expected from those special advantages which here we enjoy, is because they are not so careful to improve the benefit to be had by society. Nothing more usual amongst men of all ranks and conditions, than to joyn together in some common design for the improvement of this quality of sociableness unto mutual benefit. This is the chief ground of all those common Associations amongst men: In ordinary affairs, *Corporations* for Cities, *Companies* for Trades; and so in higher matters, *Universities* and *Colleges* for Learning, particular Churches for Religion: Each of which in their kinds have in them a natural aptitude to afford some special help for the promoting of their several ends, though perhaps none of them, especially not the *two* last, are usually improved to the utmost benefit they are capable of. 'Tis not easie to express what great advantage might be obtained if men would but study to make the right use of mutual converse. We may see daily, especially by late experience, how
men

men of common and low breeding, being called out to such imployments, wherein they have been necessitated to put forth themselves in a more than ordinary way of conversing together, and debating of busineses with one another, how strangely their parts are heightened, how judicious and nimble they grow at business, how ready at discourse; whereas a Bookish man, that spends the greatest part of his time in reading and study, commonly he doth not know more, or if he should, yet is he less fit for those actions and busineses to which his knowledge should be applied. And therefore the great and active men of the World have still looked upon knowledge thus acquired, as *Pedantry*, which rendred a man unfit for any great imployment. And this is one reason of those prejudices which by some men have been lately taken up against these Places of Learning; because they see some others that have been bred up in another way, to be as knowing and as useful men, as those that come from hence; though such perhaps, besides the eminency of their natural abilities, have had some other
special

special advantages in their educations, some way equivalent to what is to be had in these Places, which ought to be considered and allowed for; yet it cannot be denied, but that we our selves may give too much occasion to such prejudices, by not improving all the helps we have to the best purposes.

I cannot stand to mention how much men might by this means promote their knowledge in the whole Circle of humane learning; particularly in that ability of a ready, voluble, popular Rhetorick (wherein studious and retired men are commonly defective) though it be so necessary in all kind of employments, especially for the gifts of Prayer and Preaching.

But chiefly in matter of practical Religion, which would be much advantaged if men were but more free towards one another in communicating their doubts, temptations, comforts; warming their affections, and building up one another by mutual conference.

2. That we of this Place would be very wary and careful both for our selves and those committed to our charge,

charge, in the right choice of our friends and company.

There is nothing usually hath a greater influence upon a man's temper and carriage, than the company with whom he doth converse. And hence is it that if good and bad be joyned together in any near society, they either quickly part, or become alike. And, 'tis the infirmity of our natures, that grace in the best men is so imperfect, and sin so powerful, that in the conjunction of good and evil, the good by a natural course are more easily corrupted, than the evil rectified.

We all know that it hath been the bane of many young men sent hither for education, to mistake in the first choice of their company: And 'twere well if some publick brand could be set upon such loose flagitious persons, as make it their business to seduce and corrupt others. A *Leper* under the law was the type of a sinner; and he was to go with his head uncovered, that others might know and avoid him. These close and covered sinners are very dangerous, and may do much hurt by their infection; there is scarce any such to be conversed with, *Qui*

non aliquod nobis vitium, aut commendat, aut imprimit, aut nescientibus allinit.

'Tis true, a man may make good use of the worst company, by observing the deformity, and hating the evil of them the more ; but yet there is this danger in the frequent converse with such, that the edge of our zeal and hate should be somewhat abated by custom. He that with *Lot vexeth his soul with the wicked conversation* of those amongst whom he lives, may in time be less and less vexed according as they grow more familiar to him. Besides, conversing with such will be a means to make a man satisfy himself with any low or weak degrees of goodness (which perhaps in comparison to his company may be considerable ;) whereas amongst those that are better, we have still new matter of imitation and provocation. 'Tis a good rule of a heathen, *Cum his conversare, qui te meliorem facturi sunt ; illos admitte, quos tu potes facere meliores.* Sen. Ep 7. Chuse those for your intimates, by whom you may be made better your selves ; admit such, of whom you have any probable hopes that they may be made better by you.

S

Nothing

Nothing is more incongruous and unsuitable than for a man that pretends love to Religion, to delight in those that care not for it. Such persons are of opposite relations and principles.

Exod. 32. 26. Every good man is *on the Lords side, the friend of God*, and consequently is bound to *hate that which is evil*. Wicked men are his enemies, the *Sons of Belial, of their Father the Devil*: Good men are such as *walk with God*, and have their *faces towards Sion*. Wicked men walk contrary unto him, and turn their backs upon him; And therefore such are by no means fit to associate withal.

Joh. 15. 15.
Psal. 97. 10.
2 Chron. 19. 6.

On the other side; Good men are all of a City, *fellow Citizens with the Saints*; all of a family, *of the household of faith*; all of a body, *a body fitly joyned together and compact, by that which every joynt supplieth*. God delights in them; tho he inhabit eternity, and dwells in that high and lofty place, yet he hath respect to those of humble and contrite spirits. They are styled *his portion, his inheritance; a peculiar treasure unto him, the dearly beloved of his soul: he sets apart the man that is godly for himself*. They that do not love such company here, have

Gal 6. 10.
Ephes. 4. 16.
Deut. 32. 9.
Exod. 19. 5.
Jerem. 12. 7.
Psal. 4. 3.

have little reason to expect that they shall enjoy communion with them hereafter.

A man may examine the choice of his friends by this Rule: Suppose he were in some great exigence, wherein there were no help to be expected but from heaven, can he then with any confidence send to his usual companions to relieve him with their prayers? It may be he could heretofore freely discourse and jest with them, but are they fit to pray for him; If not, this may convince his conscience that he had made a bad choice.

3. That we would labour for those special qualifications and abilities which may render us acceptable and useful in our conversing with others.

There are *four* conditions, amongst many others, that are more especially suitable to this purpose.

1. *A readiness to communicate, according to the gifts we have received, so ministering the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.* There is much envy and narrowness of spirit in that close reserved humour which some men have; who confine all their gifts to them-

1 Pet. 4. 10.

selves, as if they should lose their own knowledge by communicating of it. Such men live to themselves, as if they were not members of a body.

2. *Humility*, That's a sociable grace, lovely in it self, and acceptable to all: It fits a man both to learn and to teach; such an one will not contend, censure, disdain, but is kindly affectioned to others, esteeming better of them, than of himself.

3. *Prudence*, in distinguishing of mens tempers, prejudices, infirmities; in discerning of the right seasons and advantages to do good amongst them: Teaching a man such an amiable and alluring facility, whereby he may insinuate into the affections of others, and the more easily provoke them to love and good works.

4. *Ingenuity*, and *candor of disposition*, in owning of our own weaknesses or faults, another's gifts or preheminences. A sobriety and calmness of spirit, in suspending rash censures, bitter expressions, or whatever may exasperate; *Forbearing one another in love*. There is in some good men such a sower and rigid severity, such a proneness to censure, as makes them less

acceptable and useful in their society, and deprives them of many opportunities of doing good to others.

I can but name these particulars ; each of them would deserve to be more largely insisted upon , as being so very suitable and necessary for us of this place. But *I speak to wise men*, and am loath any further to trespass upon your patience : So then the substance of what has been said is this, That society being so necessary to humane nature, and the advantage or prejudice so very great as to our well or ill being, according to our choice of such friends with whom we do most familiarly converse, Therefore will it concern men to be very cautious and wary in this Matter.

And if they would render themselves useful and acceptable to others, it must be by being wise and virtuous and religious persons. Those only who are good in themselves being capable of doing good to others.

The End of the Eighth Sermon.

The Ninth Sermon.

ECCLES. IV. 9.

Two are better than one.

THough the general design of this Book be sufficiently plain and obvious, being a discourse from the most profound Principles of Reason and Philosophy, *de summo bono*; yet 'tis not easie to find out the particular connexion in many parts of it.

In the eighth *verse* of this *Chapter*, the *Wise man* enters upon a description of the miseries of a covetous life, which he sets forth under these three considerations. I. His *drudgery* and excessive toyl, because *there is no end of his labour*; *neither is his eyes satisfied with riches*. A very proper expression that, concerning *satisfying the eye*; that being the only enjoyment that a *miser* hath of his estate,

namely, that he can look upon it as his own; and no wonder if his labour be endless, if he must still drudge on till he have got enough to *satisfie his eye*. 2. His *inconsiderateness*, in that he doth bereave his soul of good, that is, deprive himself of the benefit which he might have in a cheerful fruition of his possessions; and yet he asks not *for whom do I labour?* that is, he doth not dispose them to any end; he neither uses them himself while he lives, nor knows who shall enjoy them when he dies. 3. His *solitariness*: *There is one alone, there is not a second, yea, he hath neither child nor brother*; that is, he is a forlorn friendless man, without the benefit and help of society. Which kind of misery the *Wise man* takes pains to set forth, by commending the contrary, shewing the advantage and convenience of a sociable life; which is first *generally* asserted in the words of the *Text*, *Two are better than one*: Then *particularly* illustrated by some common instances, to shew the advantage of society, both to the attaining of good, and the preventing and avoiding of evil. There is in such a condition, *mutual gain*; men rid more work when joyned in society, and so

increase their reward, v. 9. *mutual help* in their *infirmities*, *lifting one another* when they fall, v. 10. In their *defects* and *wants*, warning one another, v. 11. in their *dangers*, in respect of enemies, whom an united strength may more effectually withstand, v. 12.

The words of the *Text* are for the *scope* and *matter* intended to assert the advantages of friendship and a sociable life. For the *manner* of them, they are in figurative expressions; the force of which I shall endeavour to explain both *Negatively*, and *Positively*.

I. *Negatively*: I. By *two* is not meant any kind of multitude; there may be too much of this, as well as too little. No where is there less enjoyment of a mans self than when a man is oppressed with clients and visitants.

And according to this construction the Words should be inverted, and we might truly say *One* were better than *Two*, retiredness than multitude. Again, by *Two* is not meant any kind of society or friends: Not companions in iniquity, as were *Simeon* and *Levi*, this is rather a *conspiracy* than a *company*; and though such do *associate themselves*, yet they shall be broken in pieces, *Isa.* 8. 9. *Though they*
joyn

joyn hand in hand, yet they shall not go unpunished, Prov. 11. 21. 2. By *One* is not meant any kind of solitude or privacy; not such as is opposed to that hurry of business which men in publick employments are exposed unto: Those continual bustles and imbroilments, whereby a man is hindred from retiring into or being acquainted with himself. For according to this construction, the words should be inverted, and we might say *One* were better than *Two*, privacy and retirement than multitude and tumult: Again by *One* here, we are not to understand *unity*, and by *Two* *division*, as those expressions do sometimes signifie: For *unity* is much better than *division*; upon which account the *Pythagorean* Philosophers, amongst their other mystical traditions concerning numbers, were wont to set a note of infamy upon the number *Two*, because it was the *first departure from unity*.

Acts 7. 26.

2. *Positively*: 1. By *Two* is meant such as have the mutual help and benefit of one another, being linked together in the bonds of friendship; among whom those are especially to be comprehended who are joyned by that nearer and more sacred union of *Marriage*.

riage. 2. By *One* is meant such an one as lives in a forlorn desolate condition, neither loving any, nor being loved by any but himself; without the privilege of a friend to assist his labours, settle his fears, ease his griefs, and augment his comforts. So that the true meaning of the words may be comprehended in this *Proposition*.

That the sociable life of a friend is much more advantageous than to live alone. ^{Prop.} 'Tis a principle this, that hath so clear evidence for it in the very light of nature, that it might be needless to urge for it any Scripture-authority.

'Tis upon this ground that the Philosopher doth describe a man to be ζῷον πολιτικόν, a *sociable creature*, as if this did belong to the essence, and were one of the properties of humane nature.

Adam himself in the state of innocence could not be happy (though in Paradise) without a companion. Not to mention any thing of that tremendous mystery of the *Trinity* of Persons in the *Unity* of the Godhead.

As for that imaginary *Wise man* of the *Stoicks* whom they suppose to be clapt up in some dark dungeon, lost in some desolate Island, yet then he shall enjoy
such

such a kind of happiness as God himself would do if the the world were destroyed, *acquiescit sibi, cogitationibus suis traditus — in se reconditur, secum est*: Besides, that this is but boasting, and an imaginary *Idea* of such a state of perfection as no man perhaps ever did, or shall attain unto. They themselves do likewise acknowledge, that though their *Wiseman* be *seipso contentus*, yet *mauvult amicum*. Though he may make some shift without a friend, yet he had much rather have one; and therefore blame such, *qui sapientem intra cutem suam cogunt*, who would deny him this privilege, and confine him to himself.

There are three things of great consequence to the comfort and safety of life. 1. *The rectifying of our judgments.* 2. *The regulating and composing of our passions.* 3. *The assistance of our labours.* Now the sociable life of a friend will be very advantageous in all these respects.

1. For the rectifying of our judgments; that we may have a true notion of things and business, and be able to judge what is most fit and expedient in several cases and circumstances. There are two general defects which the understandings of men are liable unto. *Confusion and Error.* I. Con-

1. *Confusion* ; when our minds are overwhelmed with tumultuous thoughts for want of being methodized and digested by the relation of them. A man will be apt to run away with vain *Chimæra's*, with weak and flat projects, whilst they remain meerly in speculation and in thoughts ; whereas when they are put into words in our relation of them to others, the weakness and defects of them will presently appear.

So that a man had better (saith a *Noble Author*) discourse to a statue or picture ; than suffer his thoughts to pass in a smother. So that herein lies one special advantage of friendship, that a man hath the liberty of communicating his secret thoughts, and thereby clearing them up to himself.

2. He hath hereby likewise the benefit of faithful counsel to direct him against the *error* of his thoughts. 'Tis an usual Saying, *plus vident oculi quàm oculus* ; two eyes see more than one : And a *stander-by* many times discerns that which a better *gamester* overlooks. Men are usually very partial in judging of things wherein they are concerned, according to their inclinations and interests ; apt to gloss them over with such

such appearances as may best sute with their own advantage ; and therefore in such cases they have need of the help of others. No wise man will in a business of moment trust to the advice of a flatterer , because such an one will be sure to tell him what will please rather than what will profit ; why, for the same reason neither should he trust to himself in such cases , for *Maximus quisque adulator sibi* , every man naturally is his own greatest flatterer : Nor will a Stranger be fit for this work of counsel , because such an one may not know the whole state of our businesses, the *series* and circumstances of our affairs : Or if he do , yet we can have no security of such an one's faithfulness, but that he may be apt to warp and bend his counsels for his own private ends. 'Tis true indeed, Books will give impartial counsel, without flattery or self-seeking : But there may be these inconveniences in such counsel ; that 'tis not like to be so suitable to our particular occasions , in all the various circumstances of them ; nor so lively and efficacious as to the operation of it. And though good Books may in some sense be said to be good friends and coun-

counsellors, yet they are dead ones; whereas the advice of a faithful friend hath in it a remedy against all these inconveniences; Such an one will neither flatter us, nor serve his own ends; His wisdom and fidelity will be ready *to help us up when we fall*, v. 10. and to warm us with vigor when we are slack and remiss, v. 11.

2. Hence likewise in the *second* place may we expect the best help *for the regulating and composing of our passions*. That which for the most part proves the greatest disturbance to the peace and quiet of our lives, is from the disorders and vicissitudes of our passions, whereby the mind is kept continually out of frame. What betwixt the frenzy of anger, the ague of hopes and fears, the fever of love, the consumption of envy, our minds are kept in a continual disease and distemper. So that whatever will conduce to the preserving of these in a composedness and harmony, must needs be of great consequence to our well-fare: And the society of a friend may be very proper and effectual to this purpose; not only for the liberty we have hereby of breathing out our secret troubles, preventing

ing that inward restraint and suffocation whereby they would be multiplied, and by his counsel (which I mentioned before ;) but upon this account likewise, that such an one will help to bear a part with us , and so lighten us of our burden by his compassion, and so the less will come to our shares.

The *Passions* may be distinguished into *two* kinds ; such as are more *violent*, troublesome and unnatural, referring to *evil* ; as *Anger*, *Fear*, *Grief*, &c. Others more *kindly* and natural, relating to that which is *good*, and consequently have a greater agreeableness to our desires ; as *Love*, *Hope*, *Joy*, &c. Now the *first* of these are by the help of a friend abated and weakened, the *other* strengthened and confirmed, and *both* ways our quiet much promoted. And the reason of this difference is founded in nature : *Union strengthens any thing that is natural , and weakens all violent impressions.* That which adds to the vigor of any living Creature, doth both fit it for its natural operations, and likewise to repel any præternatural injury or violence. Thus likewise is it in those things which concern the mind ; the union of a friend doth help
to

to strengthen us in matters agreeable to our natures, and to weaken those which are repugnant. We *divide* to a friend our griefs, and so *diminish* them; we *communicate* our joys, and so *increase* them.

3. The sociable life of a friend is likewise advantageous to us, *for the assistance of us in our labours*; in respect of those many hazards and difficulties we shall meet with in our several employments; we may by this help be carried on, 1. With greater *safety and confidence*. 2. With greater *cheerfulness and vigor*. 3. With greater *success and advantage*; and that both in *secular and spiritual* affairs.

1. With greater *safety and confidence*: Which the *Wiseman* doth take particular notice of in this place, under a *twofold* instance. 1. Of *two travelling together*, and if one of them fall, the other will lift him up; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him; that is, if there be any evil which befalls a solitary helpless person, he may irrecoverably sink under it, whereas another man will find support and relief from the help of a friend. 2. Of *two contending together*;

T

that

that opposition which may be too strong for one, may be withstood and overcome by two. Which was the consideration wherewith *Joab* and his Brother *Abishai* did encourage one another, 2 Sam. 10. 11. *If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me; but if the Ammonites be too strong for thee, then will I come and help thee.* Whereas those that live without this mutual intercourse of friendly offices, must be singly exposed to all kind of hazards. The strongest guards are but weak protections, in comparison to love and friendship: *Ab ipsis armis inter arma periculum est.* Those very arms which should defend us and be for our safety, may be turned against us and prove our ruine.

*Non sic excubiæ, nec circumstantia tela,
Quàm tutatur amor* — saith *Claudian*.

And 'tis true this, in respect of spiritual affairs as well as civil; we may proceed in our duties with greater safety upon this account. Solitariness is a time of advantage for *Satans* temptations. He set upon *Eve* when alone, and our *Saviour* when in the desert:
This

This tempts the tempter; *Omnia nobis mala solitudo persuadet*, saith *Seneca*: Nothing so mischievous but this may be a temptation unto. 'Tis an old saying, He that gives himself up to solitude, must be *aut Deus aut Dæmon*, either he must have a self-sufficiency as *God*, or else *Satan* will make him as bad as himself. We are dependant creatures, and shall always in this world stand in need of mutual help from one another.

2. This will help to carry us on with *greater cheerfulness and vivacity in our business*. Society and mutual encouragement, will deceive the tediousness of our labour, and cheer us up against all the troubles and oppositions we meet with. 'Tis one of the main ends of friendship, this, to stand by and comfort a man when he is in distress. 'Twas the custom of ancient times, for friends to meet together for this very purpose; which was the occasion of the visit which *Job's* friends made to him, in the time of his affliction. *A friend is made for adversity*, saith the *Wiseman*. 'Tis no difficult matter for a man to be full of zeal and affection, whilst all things are well,

T 2

and

and prosperous, and there is no temptation to the contrary; but,

Ovid de
Trist. lib.
5. el. 15.

*Cùm Deus intonuit, non se subducere nimbo,
Id demùm est pietas, id socialis amor.*

we are to expect from others, who do not stand in the relation of friends, that they should not own us in our troubles, but estrange themselves from us, lest they likewise should partake of our misery. Like an herd of Deer, who will push away any of their fellows that is wounded. But he that is a real friend, will then take occasion to manifest his fidelity: Upon which account it is that the privilege of friendship hath been always esteemed one of the greatest comforts of life. *How pleasant is it for brethren to live together in unity!* Psal. 133. 1. *As Oyntment and perfumes rejoyce the heart, so doth the sweetness of a mans friend,* Prov. 27. 9. And for the same reason is it, that the loss of such Relations is to be esteemed as one of the greatest afflictions that we are capable of; losing a part of our selves, which cannot be without much pain and grief. Which made *David* so bemoan the death of his friend

friend *Jonathan* in those pathetic complaints; *I am distressed for thee, my Brother Jonathan, very pleasant hast thou been unto me, thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women, 2 Sam. i. 26.*

'Tis so likewise as to our spiritual conditions, the society of Christian friends being one main branch of the *Communion of Saints*. Which is, next to the favour of God and the comfort of a good conscience, the greatest privilege we enjoy on this side of heaven. Besides their good examples, we have likewise their counsel and their comforts to direct and support us in the performances of our duty: And this is the work of an *Angel*, nay of *God himself*, the Son being styled the *Councillor*, *Isa. 9. 6.* And the Holy Ghost the *Comforter*: So that by this means, one friend may be as an *Angel*, nay as *God to another*. Our *Saviour* himself, though he were all-sufficient, yet when he was in his agony, thought fit to make use of the comfort of an *Angel*. And as for the power of such to excite us unto duty, the *Wise man* Luke 22. hath well expressed it, *Prov. 27. 17.* 43.
As Iron sharpens Iron, so doth a man his friend: Upon which account the *Apostle*

exhorts to consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works, exhorting one another, Heb. 10 24, 25.

3. This will much promote the success of our labours, and procure for us a better reward, in the verse of the Text. When several heads and hands joyn together in mutual fellowship, their affairs are managed with greater wisdom, and end with better success: *Vis unita fortior*. And this is more peculiarly true in spiritual services. Though God doth always hear men when we pray to him in secret and alone, yet he hath promised that *when two or three are gathered together in his name, he will, after a more especial manner, be in the midst of them*; which made St. Paul so earnestly desire the prayers of the Romans, *συναγωνίζατο*, that they might wrestle together with him, Rom. 15. 30. and so more effectually prevail. 'Twas for this reason that our Saviour sent out his disciples *two by two*, that so they might more successfully advantage one another in the work of their ministry. You know the story of King Joash, how he prospered in all his affairs during the life of his good friend Jehoiada; but after his death, he revolted to Idolatry,

Idolatry, and with an ungrateful cruelty slew the Son of *Jehoiada* for reproving his apostacy; after which nothing prospered with him, but having been first spoiled by the *Syrians*, he was slain by his own servants, 1 Chron. 24. From all which the truth of the Proposition may sufficiently appear, that the sociable life of a friend is in many respects much more advantageous than to live alone.

1. For the Application of this; it may in the first place serve to convince such as pretend to this relation, of the obligation they are under to observe those mutual offices of friendship towards one another; of counselling them in their difficulties, bearing a share with them in their several conditions, rejoycing with them in their joys, and grieving with them in their griefs; assisting them in their labours; Without which all the professions of love and service, are but words of course that vanish into air, and signify nothing. Nay those near Relations of *Parent*, and *Child*, and *Brother*, and which is nearer, for which a man is to forsake all other, that conjugal relation of *Husband* and *Wife*, are only valuable

upon this account, as they are *friends*, and without this they are but empty names, *Deut. 13. 6. If thy Brother, the Son of thy Mother, or the Son of thy Daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend that is as thy own soul.* This last is the highest step in the gradation: All the other relations continue, though mixed with unkindness, but this last implies dearness in the very essence of it; and is altogether inseparable from it, A man may be a *Father, Son, Husband*, and without loving, but 'tis not possible for him to be a *friend* without love and friendship.

2. And that we may be thus mutually helpful, to such as we profess friendship to, we should labour for those due qualifications requisite to such a condition. Of these I shall reckon *four*.

1. There must be *true love*, which is styled the *bond of perfection*, *συνδεδεσμεν & πλειώτερον*, *Colos. 3. 14.* The only bond that can make a perfect union. As two pieces of Iron will never be perfectly hammered together, unless they are both red hot; so neither will two minds be joyned together in such an helpful union, unless they are both warmed with the same heats of affection

fection. That kind of amity which is founded wholly upon private ends, *negotiatio est, non amicitia*, it is *traffick* but not *friendship*.

2. *A wise freedom*, not to conceal any thing that may be beneficial, though it may prove distasteful. *An profecturus sim nescio, malum successum mihi, quàm fidem deesse*. When we are uncertain of the issue of our admonitions, yet this we may be sure of, that 'tis better to be without success on his part, than fidelity on our own.

3. *Patience*: Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go, Prov. 22. 24. Short spirited men, are neither good Counsellors nor Comforters. God is said *προσπορεύειν*, to suffer and bear long with the manners of his people in the wilderness, Acts 13. 18. And the Apostle enjoyns men to possess their souls in patience. Implying, that he that is out of patience, is out of the possession of his own soul; and therefore will not be fit to take care of another's.

4. *Constancy*, to hold out in all states and conditions, without deserting him in trouble. To forsake a friend in his distress, argues a man to have much baseness

baseness and meanness of spirit, and to be without all true generosity. The carriage of the Witch of *Endor* towards *Saul* will cast shame upon such unworthy persons: Though she was sure that he was the next day to lose his kingdom and be slain with his Sons, and so could neither hope for good, nor fear any hurt from him; yet when she saw him exceedingly dejected, lying upon the ground, and refusing to eat, the remembrance of what he had been impresses upon her such a reverence, that instead of meditating revenge for the law he had enacted against persons of her Trade, she courts him with all the humble and
 1 *Sam.* 28. respective language that may be; endeavours to cheer him up, bespeaks him to eat, kills for him her fatted calf; bestirs her self to prepare unleavened bread, and uses him with as much respect as if he had been still to continue in his most flourishing estate. The example of this Witch may be a just condemnation and reproach to the perfidiousness of an unconstant friend.

But above all other kinds of friendship, this of the *Conjugal Relation* doth
 most

most firmly oblige to these mutual duties. And because the occasion of this present Meeting is to commemorate a solemnity of this nature, which was celebrated in this *Church* this day was 16 years, the happiness of which hath since that time been still continued with all the blessings of domestical love and peace, besides the comforts of a hopeful posterity to succeed; therefore in order to the present occasion, the better to excite your gratitude for the mercies you commemorate, I would offer it to your consideration to look abroad into the World, and take a view of the state of many other great Families; how uncomfortably they live by reason of domestical dissentions, which sometimes rise to that height as to make a separation of those whom God hath joyned, to their mutual dishonour and discomfort: And perhaps either no posterity to continue the name, or such a vicious and dabauched one, as will be a scandal to it. They that understand the state of things abroad, will find no great scarcity of examples to this purpose. And therefore how great reason have others to be thankful for their exemption in these respects?

God's

God's peculiar blessing of any in a relation, is a farther obligation upon them to serve him in the duties of that relation, which are in this case either *special to Husband and Wife*, or *joynt and common to both*.

1. *Husbands should love their Wives as Christ loves his Church*, Ephes. 5. 25. Or *as they love their own selves*, v. 33.

2. *Be kind to them*, v. 29. *Not harsh and bitter against them*, Colos. 3. 19. *Lest she cover the Altar of the Lord with her tears*, so that he will not regard thy offering any more, nor receive it with good will at thy hand, Malach. 2. 13, 14.

3. *Give honour to them as the weaker vessels, as being heirs with you of the grace of life*, 1 Pet. 3. 7. *Being tender of displeasing or dissatisfying them by any imprudent action, or seeming neglect. Let her be unto thee as the loving Hinde, or the tender Roe, and be thou always satisfied with her love.*

The Wife must,

1. *Be subject to her Husband as to the Lord*, Ephes. 5. 22. *This is meet and comely*, Colos. 3. 18. *For after this manner the holy women of old time, that trusted in God, were in subjection to their husbands*, 1 Pet. 3. 5. Which was signified

fied by their *heads covered*, 1 Cor. 11. 10. They must not *usurp authority over the man*, 1 Tim. 2. 12. This would give occasion for the word of God to be *blasphemed*, Titus 2. 5.

2. To *reverence them*, 1 Pet. 3. 6. And out of an awful regard to take care of pleasing them, *She that is married takes care to please her own husband*, 1 Cor. 7. 34.

3. To be of *meek and sober spirits*, placing their *chiefest ornament in good works*, as *becometh women professing godliness*, 1 Tim. 2. 9, 10. Either *keeping silence*, v. 11. or *speaking with wisdom*, having the *law of kindness in her lips*, Prov. 31. 26.

The *joint Duties* common to both are:

1. *To be mutual helps*: Which was the end of this ordinance, Gen. 2. 18. participating in one another's cares and concernments; This the very name imports, they are *σὺζυγοι*, *conjuges*, *draw in the same yoke*, and therefore should partake of the same burden and benefit.

2. In the *educating of their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*; being instrumental for their regeneration,

tion, continually exciting them to love of things that are truly virtuous and noble, and to a dislike and aversion of all such matters, as are sinful and unworthy, going before them in the example of a good life: They should *whet the law upon them*, as the word signifies, *Deut. 6. 7.* that is, inculcate it, going it over and over again, as men do when they whet a thing; the first impressions are like to abide longest. To pray for them; *Job* offered a sacrifice for each of his Children: *Not to provoke them to wrath*, *Ephes. 6. 4. lest they be discouraged*, *Colos. 3. 21.* Using such a mixture of kindness and lenity in the exercise of parental authority, as may excite a filial awe mixed of love and fear.

3. In the government of the whole family. If God have blessed you in these relations, you shall take up *Joshua's* resolution, *I and my house will serve the Lord*, setting up his fear and worship in your families.

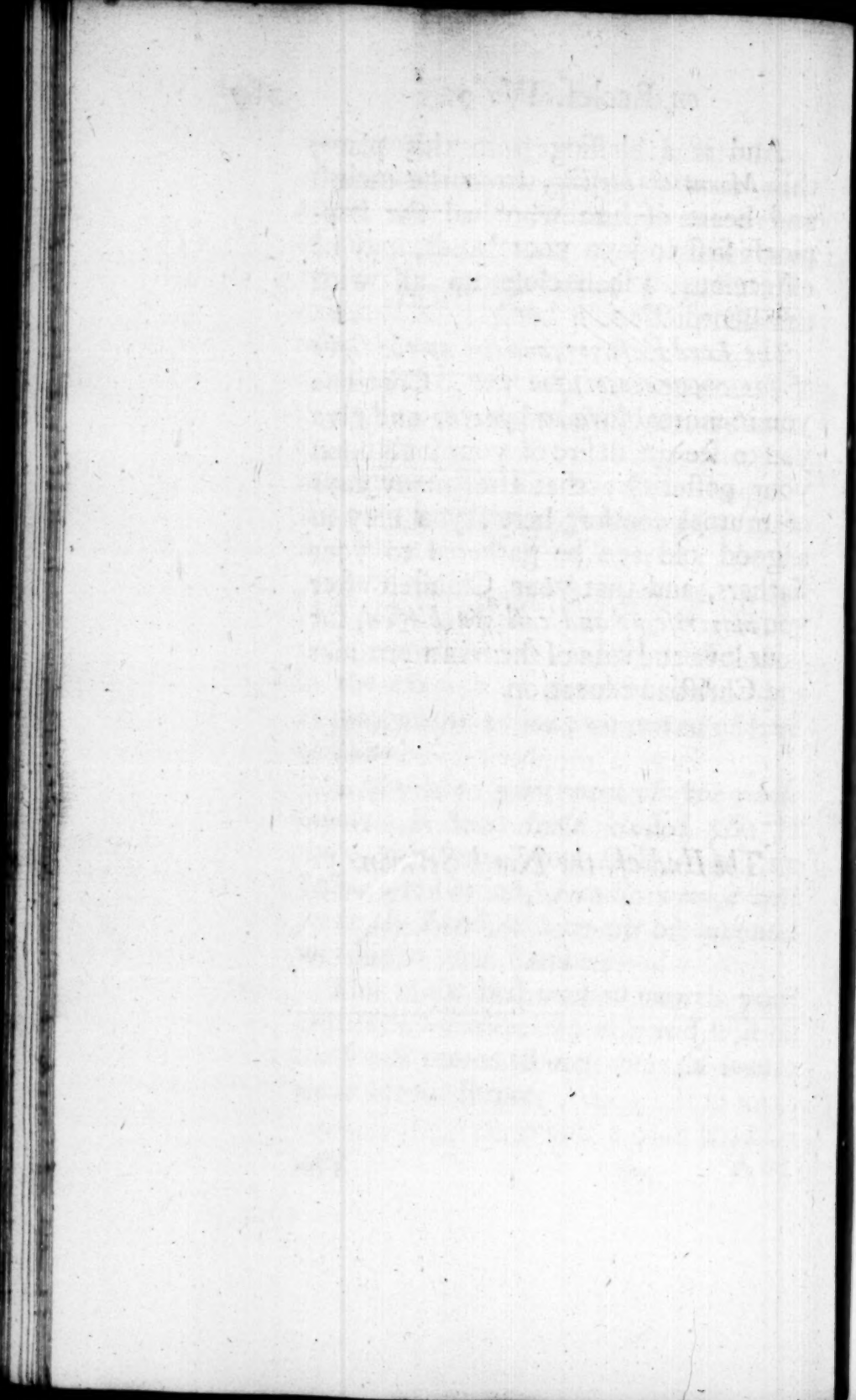
This is the best way to express your gratitude for mercies past, and will be the surest means to continue and secure them for the future.

And

And if a blessing from this place, this *Mount of blessing*, from the mouth and heart of him who had the happiness first to joyn your hands, may be efficacious, I shall close up all with this Benediction.

The Lord bless you, and lift up the light of his countenance upon you : Continue you in mutual love and peace, and give you to see the desire of your souls upon your posterity ; that after many days of mutual comfort here, you may in a good old age be gathered to your Fathers, and that your Children after you *may rise up and call you blessed*, for your love and care of them in a virtuous and Christian education.

The End of the Ninth Sermon.



The Tenth Sermon.

At the Spittle Easter Wednes/day, 1663.

ISAIAH XXXII. 8.

*The liberal deviseth liberal things; and
by liberal things shall be stand.*

IN the former part of this *Chapter*, we have a propheticall description of the happy state of the *Jewish* Church and Nation under the reign of King *Hezekiah*, who was in this respect a type of *Christ*, as to his government in the times of the *Gospel*.

And whereas the former state of things, was under many wild confusions, by reason of *violence* in the *governours*, and slavish *flattery* and *ignorance* in the *people*, they should now be restored unto a due order and *decorum*.

V

That

That this Prince should by the justice of his Government afford a security and refuge against that general irregularity and oppression, which had before abounded: And after his delivery from Sennacherib, and recovery from sickness, should effectually apply himself to the regulating of all publick violence and disorder in Government; which are here metaphorically described by those inconveniences of Weather to which the inhabitants of that Country were most liable, winds, and tempests, and drought, and heats. *He shall be a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as streams of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, v. 2.*

2. And as for that gross ignorance and servile flattery, which this people had before been guilty of, in styling evil good, and vile persons by honourable names, this should now be rectified; *Their eyes shall not be dim, and they shall understand knowledge, v. 3, 4. The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful, v. 5.* Such kind of persons shall not any longer be in repute and esteem;

esteem; men shall not either by mistake or flattery, sooth up others in their vices. That which we translate *vile*, is elsewhere rendred *foolish*: *Nabal* נָבָל, 1 Sam. 25. 25. *Nabal is his name, and folly is with him*; but being here opposed to *liberal*, it may signify a foolish niggard, not without some allusion to the story of *Nabal*, whose name might in those days be used as a by-word. In the original there is an elegant *paranomasia*: *Nabal shall not be Nadib*. Though their names be somewhat near, yet their natures are vastly distant: Because such vile persons will both *speak* and *contrive* and *practise* vile, disingenuous, false, unworthy things, v. 6, 7. Whereas on the contrary, *the liberal deviseth liberal things, &c.*

That's the scope of the place, and the connexion of the words: In them we have these *three* parts or *terms* to be explained.

1. The *subject*, or person spoken of, *the liberal man*.
2. The *property* ascribed to him, *deviseth liberal things*.
3. The *benefit* or advantage promised to it, *and by liberal things shall he stand*.

Erod. 25. 2
c. 35. 5, 22.

Psal. 110.
3.

Prov. 17. 7.
Psal. 118.
9.

1. For the *subject*, or person spoken of; the *liberal* נָדִיב: The *vulgar* translates it, the *Prince*; the LXX. and the *Arabick*, the *Religious*; the *Syriac*, the *Great man*. The original *verb* signifies properly to give with a ready willing mind, voluntariness, freeness, generosity, largeness of heart, a cheerful, bountiful giver. 'Tis frequently used in Scripture for a *Prince*, or a *Lord*, because such kind of persons are by their conditions more peculiarly obliged to be so: answerable to the *Greek* ἐνεργής, which we translate *benefactor*, Luke 22. 25. And equivalent to those *English* phrases, *a man of honour*, *a generous person*, one that is *truly noble and worthy*, of a free ingenuous spirit, without any tincture of servility or baseness. In opposition to a narrow, abject, sordid mind.

2. The property ascribed to this liberal person: He *deviseth liberal things*; wherein there is an *Act* and *Object*.

1. The *Act*, he *deviseth*, עָצָה. *Consultit, meditatur*; the bent and inclination of his mind is set this way; his thoughts are continually working upon it. The word may denote *two* things:
Either

Either *serious deliberation* about it, or *readiness of mind* to it,

I. *Serious deliberation about it*; he *deviseth*, that is, he employs his most serious thoughts in this business, consulting and contriving in his mind the most proper and effectual ways for it: This is stiled, *v. 6.* The *working of the heart*; speaking of the vile person, his *heart doth work iniquity.* And 'tis elsewhere said of the wicked, that *he deviseth mischief upon his bed, and sets himself in a way that is not good.* The expression doth denote a purposed application of the thoughts, when men are studious and inquisitive how to effect and contrive things to the best advantage. Psal. 36. 4.

II. *Readiness* and spontaneity; such an one doth not stay till he be provoked or necessitated by others to such kind of works, but doth of his own mind cast about in his thoughts, how to find the most fitting objects for them. It hath been a Proverbial saying, that *Liberalitas non facit syllogismum*, Liberality doth not stay to argue and debate, when a proper and fitting occasion is offered, but upon the first suggestion doth most freely close and comply with it.

2. The *Object*, *liberal things* נדיבות , *ea que digna sunt precipe*, things that are noble and generous, such as become a person of a large and bountiful heart, such things as are of the most comprehensive nature, redounding to publick general benefit, and the good of Mankind. In opposition to those *little acts* of fraud, and circumvention, and surprizal, mentioned before, and all those *narrow* selfish designs, which vile persons are addicted to.

3. The *benefit* or advantage promised to it: By liberal things shall he stand, יקום. The Word may signify to be *established* (as it is rendered in the margin) or to *rise*, *propter liberalitatis consurget*. We are apt to think that these works of bounty, will be a means to undo a man, and bring him down in his estate: Which is an opinion that the *Philosopher*, *Eth. lib. 4. chapt. 1.* doth expressly own, affirming, *that a liberal man cannot grow rich*. But 'twas because he was ignorant of those *divine promises* which are made to this virtue; and had not sufficiently considered the several *instances* to the contrary, which experience might have suggested to this purpose amongst the very

very *Heathens*. Such kind of persons shall not only be *not ruined* by their bounty, but they shall hereby be *confirmed* and *advanced* in all kind of prosperity; what they bestow in this kind shall prove a *saving*, instead of *casting away*; and *he that soweth bountifully*, 2 Cor. 9. 6. *shall reap bountifully*.

So that the *Text* doth contain a *description* of this virtue of *liberality*, by its work or *property*; and a *recommendation* of it by its wages, or the blessing and *success* that belongs to it.

'Tis a noble subject, and very proper for the present Solemnity. And if the plainest evidence from *Scripture*, or the clearest deductions of *reason* may be of any force, I doubt not but to propose such considerations about it, as to men that will attend and consider, shall either convince them, and win them over to their duties, or leave them *inexcusable*.

In the prosecution of this subject, I shall observe this plain method.

1. Endeavour to shew the *nature* of this Virtue; what it is, and wherein it consists.

2. To prove the *necessity* of it, or the grounds of our obligation to it, from *Scripture* and *Reason*; and then,

3. To apply it to our selves by some useful Inference.

I. In treating concerning the *first* of these, the *nature* of this Virtue, I shall speak briefly to these *four* heads: 1. The several *Names* of this Virtue. 2. The *Nature* of it. 3. The *Qualifications* of it, and *Opposites* to it.

1. For the several *Names* whereby 'tis described. There are two *Hebrew* words for it נָדִיב and שָׂעִי, both of them mentioned, v. 5. and they do each of them signify nobility and dignity, because this Virtue is so in it self, and 'tis essential to such as deserve to be so esteemed; answerable to those *English* words used to this purpose, *Nobleness* and *Generosity*; The *Greek* ἐλευθεριότης; and *Latin*, *liberalitas*, from whence the *English* is derived, do import an ingenuous freedom in opposition to servility and baseness.

The periphrastical descriptions of it, are such as these, *Opening our hands wide*, Deut. 15. 8. *Drawing out our souls*, Isa. 58. 10. *Dispersing abroad*, 2 Cor. 9. 9. *Being enriched in every thing*

thing to all bountifulness, 2 Cor. 9. 11.
To be rich in good works, ready to
distribute, willing to communicate,
1 Tim. 6. 18.

2. For the Nature of it; 'tis descri-
bed by the *Philosopher* to be, *ἡ
χρήματα μεσότης*, a virtuous mediocrity
in the right use of our wealth, direct-
ing a man to a due measure, both in
the *acquiring* and *keeping* of his estate,
but chiefly in *giving* and disposing of
it upon fitting occasions: Or, 'tis a
virtuous habit, whereby we are en-
abled and inclined to relieve the want,
and promote the welfare of others,
in such cases where we are not obli-
ged by humane Laws. In persons of
large and princely estates, and in works
of splendidness and grandeur, 'tis stiled
by the name of *magnificence*; which
differs only *gradually* from it: Being
extended to persons in a state of suf-
fering and *misery*, 'tis stiled *mercy* or
pity. To persons in a condition of
want, 'tis stiled *Alms* or *Charity*: Being
each of them the same thing for *kind*
and *substance*, and diversified only by
the *subjects* and *objects*.

3. The

The Tenth Sermon,

3. The *Qualifications* or conditions required to the due exercise of it, which are chiefly four.

1. *Willingness*: 2. *Freeness*: 3. *Readiness*, for the manner; 4. *Largeness*, for the measure; in opposition to *Grudging*, *Mercenariness*, *Delay*, *Sparingness*.

1. It must be done *willingly*, with spontaneity, *ex duplici*, with forwardness of mind, 2 Cor. 9. 2. Not *grudgingly*, but *cheerfully*, v. 7. *Thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest to thy brother*, Deut. 15 10. *Sic des, quemadmodum velles accipere*. Prevent being asked, which will exceedingly enlarge a kindness: *Non tulit gratis, qui cum rogasset accepit*: An ingenuous man may pay dear for a kindness, when he is put to buy it with solicitation. An unjust Judge may be prevailed upon with importunity: *David* doth with a kind of triumphant joy celebrate the temper of his people in offering so *willingly* their contributions towards the Temple; he looks upon it as such an excellent disposition, as was both acceptable to God, and approved of men; such, as was an honour to the Nation, and which God did highly esteem.

2 Cor. 8. 12.

2 Chron 29
17, 18.

2. It

2. It must be done *Freely*, without expecting reward, *Luke 6. 35. Do good——expecting nothing again; freely you have received, freely give.* He that is liberal upon design, may be stiled mercenary. Such kind of gifts are not benevolence, but a bargain; not a dole, but a bait: *Mittit in hamo; Venatio est non donatio*, saith *St. Hierom.* That's a remarkable place, *Prov. 22. 16. He that oppresseth the poor to encrease his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.* 'Tis observable there, that giving to the rich, is coupled with oppressing the poor; both of them arising from the same kind of temper in men, and designing the same end, as being alike thought sure ways to encrease our wealth, but the issue will be, that such shall surely want. There is another apposite Text to this purpose, *Luke 14. 12. When thou makest a dinner, call not thy rich neighbours, lest they also bid thee again, and so a recompence be made thee.* One would think there should be no great hazard in that; and yet 'tis mentioned as a dangerous thing, which men ought carefully to avoid, as being likely upon another account to redound to our loss
and

The Tenth Sermon,

and prejudice, by hindering our better recompences at the resurrection of the just, v. 14.

3. It must be done *readily*, without delay: If that saying be true, that *bis dat qui citò*; then he doth but half give, who gives slowly: Say *not to thy neighbour, Go and come again, and to morrow I will give thee, when thou hast it by thee*, Prov. 3. 28. *Tantum gratiæ demis, quantum moræ adjicis*, We are apt our selves to be very impatient in our desires, when we are under any want or exigence, and to say with Psal. 69, David, *Make haste, O Lord, to help me: 17. 143. 7. I am in trouble, O hear me speedily, for my spirit faileth*. And 'tis but reason that we should be willing to do as we would be done unto.

4. Besides these several qualifications for the *manner*, it must likewise be done *freely* and *liberally* for the *measure*; according to our several abilities, *opening our hands wide, and sowing bountifully*. 2 Cor. 9. 6. 'Tis for a brother of low degree to give *παιδωδύως*, sparingly: They that 1 Tim. 6. 18. are *rich in this world*, must be *rich in good works* also. Goats hair and Badgers-skins may be a suitable gift for the people, and a mite for a poor Widow; but

but the rich are to give *Purple*, and *Gold*, and *Jewels*. And in this sense is that *Scripture* to be fulfilled, that to whom much is given, of them much shall be required. *Exod. 35.*

4. The *Opposites* to it ; which (as of all other moral virtues) are of two kinds, *redundant*, *deficient* ; and *Profuseness*, and *Covetousness*.

Whereas there is a twofold Office of liberality, namely, to direct us in a due measure in getting or keeping, and in spending or giving. The *Prodigal* is excessive in the latter, and defective in the former : on the contrary, the *Covetous* is excessive in the former, and defective in the latter.

1. The exceeding extreme is stiled *Prodigality*, profuseness, riotousness, which observes neither the due manner nor measure in keeping, or giving. It hath this peculiar folly belonging to it, that it takes care to destroy it self : *Quid stultius* (saith Cicero) *quam quod libentur facias, curare ut id diutius facere non possis.*

2. The deficient extreame is churlishness, tenacity, shutting up the bowels of compassion, being greedy of filthy lucre. *1 Tim 3.3.*
It hath these particular characters given

to

The Tenth Sermon,

1 Tim. 6.
5, 6, 9, 10.

to it in Scripture ; 'tis a kind of *Idolatry*, inconsistent with Religion, *No man can serve God and Mammon*. He that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him : 'Tis the root of all evil, leading men into temptations and snares, into many foolish and noysome lusts, which drown men in perdition and destruction. 'Tis hateful to men, amongst whom it will render a person vile and contemptible : and 'tis abominable to God, the covetous whom God abhorreth, Psal. 10. 3.

II. I proceed to the second head, the necessity of it, or the grounds of our obligation to it from Scripture and Reason.

The Scripture proofs to this purpose I shall reduce under these four heads : 1. The Precepts for it. 2. The Commendations of it. 3. The Promises made to it. 4. The Threats and Judgments denounced upon the neglect of it.

1. The Precepts for it, which are very numerous, Deut. 15. This duty, within a little compass, is inculcated no less than four several times, and urged with much emphaticallness : *Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand against thy poor Brother,*

V. 7.

v. 7. But thou shalt open thy hand wide to him, v. 8. Thou shalt surely give him, and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou givest to him, v. 10. Therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thy hand wide to thy Brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land, v. 11.

Ecclef. 11. 1. Cast thy bread upon the waters; give a portion to seven, and also to eight. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand. Matth. 5. 42. Give to him that asketh thee. Luke 6. 33. Do good ——— Hoping for nothing again. 1 Tim. 6. 18. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate. Titus 3. 8. This I will, that thou affirm constantly, That those who believe in God, be careful to maintain good works. These are some of the Scripture-Commands to this purpose, which are very plain and positive. Nor can any reasonable man doubt, but that he ought in such cases to yield obedience to him who hath the supreme dominion over us.

2. The *Commendations* of it. That which we translate a *liberal soul*, *Prov. 11. 25. in the Hebrew is the soul of blessing;*

The Tenth Sermon,

blessing ; because 'tis so both actively and passively. As the virtue of Charity is frequently celebrated for one of the most excellent amongst all the rest, and set forth by many peculiar commendations, as being better than sacrifice ; the fulfilling of the Law ; the bond of perfectness ; the great Commandment ; the Royal Law : So is Bounty one of the top-branches of Charity.

'Tis justly counted a privilege, which men ought to seek after and rejoyce in, That they may receive good from others. Now the Scripture tells us, that *'tis more blessed to give, than to receive*, Acts 20. 35. 'Tis both the evidence and the ornament of our Religion : 'Tis the chief fruit whereby we are to judge of our sincerity. Men do vainly pretend to Faith and Religion, without the proof of such good works : *Obadiah* doth urge this to the Prophet as an evidence of his *fearing God*, that he had been careful to relieve others in distress. And the *Cen-*
turion was for this reason stiled a man of worth. *Pure Religion and undefiled*, is to abound in works of this nature, *to visit the fatherless and the widow*, Jam. 1. 27. *The wisdom that is from*

1 Kings
18. 12, 13.

Luke 7. 5.

from above is full of mercy and good fruit;
Jam. 3. 17.

The *Apostle* describes liberality to be a demeaning our selves suitably, to our professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ, 2 Cor. 9. 13. And elsewhere he styles being fruitful in good works, a walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, providing things honest in the sight of all men, 2 Cor. 8. 21. Works of bounty are in another place said to be an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing unto God. Col. 1. 10.
Heb. 13. 16
Phil. 4 18

The image of God doth more especially consist in this; nothing renders us so like him, as *beneficence*. We shall for this be called the *Children of the highest*, Luke 6. 35. 'Tis stiled by the name of *perfection*, Luke 6. 36. compared with *Matth.* 5. 48. By this a man is said to honour his maker, Prov. 14. 31. To make God a debtor, Prov. 19. 17. To feed hungry Christ, and to clothe naked Christ: And at the day of judgment, these kind of services shall have the preference before all others, men being doom'd to their eternal states according as they have been forward or negligent in these duties. And what Colos. 3. 12.
Matth. 27.

W

can

can be said more highly in the commendation of any thing?

3. The promises that are made to it : In the general, of happiness, blessing, reward. *He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he*, Prov. 14. 21. *He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed*, Chap. 22. 9. And God will pay him again, Chap. 19. 17. *His reward shall be great ; It shall be given unto him, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over*, Luke 5. 38.

In special; for this life and that which is to come.

1. For this life.

Success in our affairs : For this, the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto, Deut. 15. 10.

Deliverance out of trouble : If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day ; and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not, Isa. 58. 10, 11,

Tran-

Tranquility in our conditions : Daniel tells King Nebuchadnezzar, that shewing mercy to the poor may be a good means to lengthen his tranquility, Dan. 4. 27.

Plenty : He that gives to the poor shall not lack, Prov. 28. 27. The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself, Chap. 11. 25. With this particular difference from the wealth that is gotten by other means, that the gain which is the fruit of the promise, and proceeds from the blessing of the Lord, doth make rich, and he adds no sorrow with it, Prov. 10. 22.

Honour : Such an one shall be had in everlasting remembrance, Psal. 112. 6. His name shall be exalted with honour, v. 9. Men shall rise up at the mention of him, and call him blessed.

Provision for their posterity : His seed shall be blest, Psal. 37. 15. So as not to beg their bread, Psal. 25.

2. And as for the life to come : Men may by this means make themselves friends of the unrighteous Mammon, which shall hereafter receive them into everlasting habitations. They do hereby lay up in store for themselves a good

Luke 16. 9.

1 Tim. 6. 19

good foundation against the time to come; whereby they may lay hold on eternal life :
 Matth. 25. the last doom and sentence of, *Come ye*
 34. *blest*, or *Goye curs'd*, being pronounc'd upon men according as their demeanour hath been in this respect.

4. The threats and judgments denounc'd and executed upon the neglect of it, Prov. 21. 13. *Whoso stoppeth his ear at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard*, Chap. 28. 27. *He that hideth his eyes from such as need his help, shall have many a curse* : Men will curse him in prosperity, and not pity him in adversity. *He shall have judgment without mercy who hath shew'd no mercy*, Jam. 2. 13. *With what measure we mete to others, it shall be measured to us again*. Which was verifi'd in that parable of Dives, *Qui non dedit micam, non gustavit guttam*. He that denied a crumb of bread, could not receive a drop of water : You know the sentence upon that unmerciful servant, who having received great favour himself, would not yet shew any kindness or pity to his fellow, 'tis said *his Lord was wroth with him, and deliver'd him to the tormentors*, Matth. 18. 34.

This

This was the occasion of that dreadful sentence of Excommunication denounced against the *Ammonites* and *Morabites*, Deut. 23. 34. *They shall not enter into the Congregation of the Lord for ever, (i. e.)* as some *Interpreters* would have it, though they should be willing to turn *Profelytes*, yet should not they be admitted, *nor shalt thou seek their peace and prosperity all thy days ; v. 6.* And the reason was, *because they met you not with bread and water in the way when ye came forth out of Egypt.* These being the only Nations whom God had charged the *Israelites* not to fight against, Deut. 2. 19. And for them not to afford them any relief in their distress, had in it so much unkindness, as should set an everlasting brand of infamy upon their Nations.

One of the Reasons which brought that fearful destruction upon *Sodom* was, because she did not strengthen the hand of the poor and needy, Ezek. 16. 49, 50.

Job had such an abhorrency against this vice, that he professeth he had rather his arm should fall from his shoulder-blade, and his arms be broken from the bone, than be guilty of it, Job 31. 16.

Prov. 11. 24. There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. That place seems to refer to such as do give somewhat (though sparingly); And if such come to poverty, much more shall those that give nothing at all.

I have done with the *Scripture*-proofs to this purpose. It cannot be but that men who do in good earnest believe the *Scriptures*, must needs be convinced by such plain evidences as these.

I proceed to the *Arguments* from *Reason*, which I shall rank under these three heads.

{ *Equity,*
 { *Justice,*
 { *Advantage.*

1. From *Equity*: The rules of fitness and congruity, such as every one who pretends to reason or ingenuity, must submit unto, do oblige us to the exercise of this grace. Which may be made out upon a threefold account. In respect of

{ *God,*
 { *The Poor,*
 { *Our selves.*

1. In

1. In respect of God, who bestows upon us all that we have, and therefore may well expect that we should be ready to lay out some of it for his use, according to his appointment. *All things come of thee, and of thine own we have given thee* (saith David), 1 Chron. 29. 14. *He renews his mercies to us every morning, and daily loads us with his benefits. He gives to us liberally, and upbraids us not. He spreads our Tables, and fills our Cups, till they run over; that we may be more ready with our superfluities, to fill the empty, and satisfie the hungry with our good things, that our abundance may be a supply for others wants, that there may be an equality,* 2 Cor. 8. 14. That passage 1 Tim. 6. 17. doth in every word of it contain an argument to this purpose. *He gives us all things richly to enjoy. He gives; we can claim nothing as our due; us so unworthy; richly; (i. e. bountifully)* that others might be supplied out of our store; to enjoy, not to hoard up or waste upon our lusts, but to dispose of to their proper end and use. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his pover-*

ty might be made rich. 2 Cor. 8. 9.

And there is all imaginable equity in this consequence, why God should require this of us, having done so much for us. Suppose a man ransomed from death, and slavery, and want, and put into the possession of a great estate by the bounty of another; who thereupon should make it his earnest request to him, that for his sake he would spare some little of that plenty he had now conferred upon him, towards the relief of some friends of his, who were nearly related to him, upon whom he might have bestowed all that wealth, which he had chosen rather to confer upon him: And should adjure him to this, by all the entreaties, promises, and repeated importunities that could be; would not Heaven and Earth cry shame against such a vile ungrateful wretch, as should in so small a matter neglect so great an obligation? would not every mans heart rise up with much keenness and indignation against the very mention of such a monster? But you will say, are there any such vile wretches in the world? I answer, All those that are rich, and not bountiful upon good occasions, they are such.

And

And if any such there be in this place, I would say to every one of them, as *Nathan* did to *David*; *Thou art the man.*

2. 'Tis equitable in respect of the *Poor*, who by reason of their relation to us, and their need of us, may reasonably expect assistance from us. God could have provided sufficiently for every one, but his providence hath so ordered it, *That there shall be always poor in the Land*, to prove us in this kind, that we might have fit matter for the exercise of this grace, and that we might have some visible examples of what he can reduce us to when he pleases. Nor are dignities or riches upon any other account desirable, but as they afford means and opportunities of doing good to such as stand in need of our help. So that the different states and degrees amongst men, as to riches and poverty, seem by the Providence of God to be purposely designed in order to the exercise of this Virtue.

*Deut. 15.
11.*

3. 'Tis equitable in respect of *our selves*. We are miserable, despicable creatures, and can hope for nothing from God, but upon the account of Bounty; without his mercy we are all

of us lost and undone. Now the rules of congruity will require, that we should be as ready to shew mercy to others, as to expect it for our selves; there is no man so absolute and independent, as not at some time to stand in need of the help of others; Human Society could not subsist, without the mutual offices of kindnesses; and nothing is more suitable to natural reason, than that we should be ready to do as we would be done unto. That's the *first* argument upon the account of common reason and ingenuity.

2. This is not only equitable and fitting, and the not doing of it an incongruous, unreasonable thing: But 'tis likewise *just*, and the omission of it an *injury* or *sin*. 'Tis observed by some learned *Criticks*, That in the *Hebrew*, and the rest of the *Oriental* Tongues, this virtue of Bounty and Beneficence is styled by the name of *Justice* or *Righteousness* צדקת this being the word most frequently used for it, and is accordingly often so *rendred* by the *Septuagint*; in that forecited place. *Psal.* 112. 6. *The Righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance*: Where the context will make it

it evident, that by *righteous* is meant the bountiful and charitable man. So *Psal. 37. 12. The wicked borroweth and payeth not again, but the righteous sheweth mercy and giveth :* And in several other places.

*Prov. 10. 2.
Psal. 25.
26.*

Though one man cannot implead another before the Bar of humane Law, for not doing him a kindness, for not being liberal to him; the end of the Law being to preserve men within the bounds of justice; to keep them from doing injuries to one another, which is more immediately necessary to the peace of Societies: Yet in God's Law, the not doing a kindness, when we have a fitting occasion, is counted *injustice*; and he will arraign us for the omission of such occasions.

The *Apostle* having said, *Rom. 13. 7. Render to all their dues, pay to every man your debts; subjoyns in the next verses, Owe no man any thing but to love one another; Implying, that in the Scripture-sense, Charity is a debt, and the not paying of it an injustice. 'Tis such a debt as we can never fully discharge, but though we are always paying of it, yet we must still be in arrear, whilst there shall remain any ability,*

and occasion for our exercising of it.

Prov. 3. 27. Withhold not good from him to whom it is due (or from the owners thereof) (speaking of works of bounty. When there are fit objects proposed to us that need our help, they have a just title to it; and the not assisting of them, is withholding from them their due.

Luke 16.
12.

We are but Stewards of our estate, and are to lay it out for such uses of the Family, as are most agreeable to our Master's will; and the neglect of this is styled, *being unfaithful in that which is another man's*.

God himself is the great Sovereign and Proprietor of the world; all men are but his Subjects and Tenants; there is a Tribute or Rent which he requires from them, upon the non-payment of which they forfeit their Tenure, and afterwards do but usurp, being in his sight without any lawful title to what they possess. And he hath appointed two kind of Receivers for this tribute or rent, which we owe to him, his *Ministers* and the *Poor*; the not paying to one of these is expressly styled, *robbing of God*, *Malach. 3. 8.* 'tis so likewise in the other case, *Pauperibus non impertire rapina est*; Nay, it may prove much worse, a kind of
of

of *Murther*, which is the highest kind of injustice, Because not to save when we may, is to destroy, as is implied by our Saviour, *Luke 6. 9.* That's the *Second* Argument upon the account of *justice* or duty.

3. 'Tis highly *advantageous* to us; which is the *last* Argument upon the account of *interest*. *By liberal things shall we stand.* 'Tis the best means to improve and confirm a mans condition, in all the felicities of this life, and a better.

1. For *this life* : 'Tis the most effectual way both to improve and preserve our estates, and to render us honourable and amiable in the esteem of others.

1. For the increasing of our estates : The *Apostle* compares it to *sowing*, which refers to an *harvest*. The *Husbandman* would never scatter his seed upon the ground, if he did not know, that 'tis much better for him to dispose of it so, than to keep it in his granary. 'Tis of all others the most gainful way of Trading. *Ars omnium quæstuosissima*, as one of the *Fathers*. When we receive much for a little, certain for uncertain, eternal things for temporal.

2. For

2. For the preserving it safe. The Jews call *Alms* by the name of *Salt*, for its preserving power. 'Tis laying up treasures in Heaven, where *rust cannot corrupt*, nor *thieves break through and steal*. Such persons whom we help by our beneficence, are but so many Treasurers whom we intrust with the custody of our wealth; who will preserve it more safely for us, than any lock or guards, or any other repositories can do. As for that wealth which is not so disposed of, the thief may rob our Treasuries; the fire may devour our houses; Creditors may grow insolent; our grounds may become fruitless and barren, by reason of unseasonable weather; tempests may destroy our adventures in merchandize; some mistake in our conveyances may overthrow the title of our purchases; every one of these may be subject to a thousand casualties. But,

Martial.

*Extra fortunam est, quicquid donatur
amicis;*

Quas dederis, solas semper habebis opes.

Saith the *Epigrammatist*. A man can be sure only of that wealth which he hath given away.

'Tis

'Tis storied of a great man, eminent for his bounty, that being asked by a friend what he did intend to reserve for himself, after all his bountiful gifts bestowed upon others? Answered, *ea ipsa quæ dono*: implying, that instead of alienating, he did rather confirm his propriety in them, by disposing of them to good uses. *Alphonfus.*

'Twas a significant saying to this purpose, *Habeo quod dedi, perdidit quod servavi*, I do keep what I gave, but I have lost what I kept. To which it may be added, That as these riches are not so much exposed to danger, so are they less liable to the envy of others.

For Honour and Repute, which is better than great Riches, 'tis said, he that bath mercy on the poor, honoureth his maker. *Prov. 14. 31.* And God hath said, *Him that honoureth me, I will honour.* Every man is a friend to a man of gifts. *Prov. 19.* Nor is such an one so much a loser in his purse by his bounty, as he is a gainer in the hearts and affections of men. The Centurion (tho of a different way from the Jews) was upon this account highly valued in their esteem, which made them so earnestly to intercede with our Saviour in his behalf, as being a worthy

worthy generous person, who had obliged them by his publick beneficence ; and our *Saviour* did upon that reason more readily comply with their desires upon the first motion. Though upon another occasion being twice solicited
Joh. 4. 46. in the behalf of a *Noble-man's son*, he refused to go.

This gives us an interest in the prayers of others. *2 Tim. 1. 16.* The *Apostle* mentioning the good offices done to him by *Onesiphorus*, adds, *The Lord give mercy to his house, for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.*

St. Hierom speaking of a bountifull man, gives this reason why such an one must alwayes be safe and happy ; *Habet enim multos intercessores, & impossibile est multorum preces non exaudiri.* Men do generally wish well to such, and speak well of them ; and will be ready to stand by them, and assist them in their troubles. The highest expression of love that can be, is for a man to be
Joh. 15. 13. ready to lay down his life for another ; greater love than this hath no man. Now though scarcely for a righteous man will one dye, i. e. one of a severe innocence ;
yet

yet for a good man some will dare to dye,
Rom. 5. 7. (i. e.) for a Friend and Bene-
factor ; one that is a publick good, and
of general usefulness, worth a thou-
sand others ; For such an one men may
be ready to venture their lives , which
is the highest expression of love and ho-
nour that may be.

And as for the advantage we hereby
receive as to our *future estates*, this like-
wise is much every way. 'Tis some se-
curity from that danger and prejudice,
which follows upon the having of ri-
ches. The evil of abundance is, That
we are thereby tempted to forget God: *Prov. 30.*
And 'tis the benefit of liberality, That
it makes us to remember him, by *laying*
up our treasures in Heaven: And where the
Treasure is, there will the heart be also,
Luke 12. 33.

Works of Beneficence are called *i Tim. 6.*
by St. Paul, *Θεμέλιον* The foundation of ^{19.}
that reward we shall receive in the
world to come. Some *Citricks* have ob- *Mr. Mede.*
served, that this Greek word in the *Helle-*
nistical use, hath an allusion to another
Hebrew word, which in the *Rabbinical*
Dialect signifies *Tabulæ contractus*, a
Bill of Contract, a Bond or Obligation,
by vertue of which, at the day of pay-
ment,

ment, we may plead a right to the reward, as being justly due to us, not *vi meriti*, but *vi pacti*, by virtue of that promise whereby God hath been pleased to become our debtor. And which is most desirable, to have Christ at the last day to be our *debtor* and *rewarder*, or our *Enemy* and *Revenger*?

III. In the *Application* of what hath been said, there are some few things I would observe, by way of

Doctrinal } *Inference.*
Practical }

I. By way of *Instruction*, these *Collaries*.

i. If such persons only be truly noble and generous, who devise liberal things, then all such as are averse from such things, are but *Nabals*, vile and foolish, and ought to be so esteemed amongst them that will pass righteous judgment, and are able to distinguish of things that differ. There may be an outward respect due to titles of Honour and Dignity, but when they are meerly nominal, without any foundation of real worth to answer them, 'tis not to be expected that they should acquire

acquire an inward esteem in the judgments and affections of judicious Persons. Men may have the custody of great estates, but they are rather the *slaves* than the *masters* of them, unless they have hearts to dispose of them to good uses.

2. Hence we learn what to think of those, who are so far from *devising liberal things*, that they must be *forced to do just things*. And will in cases of differences yield no further than they can be compelled by Law: insisting to the utmost upon every *punctilio* of advantage, which the rigor and the letter of the Law will afford them. These are so far from being persons of *honour*, that in the Scripture-sense they ought not to be reputed persons of honesty; *Equity* being necessary to that, no less than *Justice*.

3. Those persons are much mistaken, who think acts of this kind to be arbitrary; that they may exert or restrain their bounty at their own pleasure, without doing injury to any one. Whereas 'tis plain, that the Scripture doth impose it as a necessary duty, and esteem the omission of it an injury. And though we cannot be accused for our neg-

neglects in this kind before man's *Tribunal*, yet God will pass upon us our final Sentence according to these works.

4. If this be so sure a means for the securing and improving our estates, and that *by liberal things men shall stand*: This may afford some ground for our enquiry, Whether the neglect of this duty may not have some influence upon the general complaints in these times, of want of money and trading, and of mens failing in their estates. This is plain enough, that there is no age to be mentioned, wherein the generality of persons of all ranks and conditions have been more profuse and extravagant, as to those particular expences that concern themselves in all respects, *Buildings, Diet, Apparel, &c.* And it may justly be feared, that this *excess* in *private* expences, may occasion a *defect* in their publick bounty: And then no wonder if men by neglect of *liberal things* do *fail* and *break*.

2 By way of *Exhortation*; We may from hence be excited to these *two* things.

1. To give honour, love and respect to liberal persons: This is as much due

to them from others as their bounty and charity is due from them to others. And it cannot be less than an injury to detain from any one what is his due.

It was an usual Form amongst the Jews upon the naming of worthy persons deceased, to add this clause to the mention of them, *whose memory is blessed*. And hence was that custom in the Primitive times of appointing *Anniversary Memorials and Festivals* in Honour of the Worthies deceased; to recount their good deeds, celebrating the praises due to them, that others by their example might be excited to do the like. And here I cannot in justice omit the mentioning of a late publick good Work (not sufficiently taken notice of, though) redounding much to the honour of our Nation and Religion, I mean the Redemption of so many Captives from Slavery, and restoring them again to their native Countries; which certainly ought to be commemorated with praise as a work of a *sweet savour*, both to God and Men: and a further addition to that double honour, which was before due to such as were the chief Promoters of it; I mean the Clergy of this Church, ingratitude to God for his

gracious and wonderful restitution of them to their just Rights and Revenues.

And I may truly speak it to the everlasting honour of this famous *City*, that it hath afforded as many liberal worthy Benefactors for publick good works, (and that too since the *Reformation*, whatever the *Papists* suggest to the contrary) as any other *City* in the Christian World. And which ought further to be acknowledged to their deserved praise, the several *Companies* of it, have generally discharged the trust committed to them by the Legacies of others, with much more honour and fidelity than particular men use to do. Having of their own accord, without being necessitated to it by a course of Law, observed that fair ingenuous equity, which is proper in such cases, by augmenting the allowances bequeathed in some proportion, according as the price and value of things hath increased. This I know hath been done in some cases; and I am sure by the rules of equity it ought to be so in others. That what was at first designed by the Will of the *Donor* as a meet and liberal maintenance, and now by the rising of the

Luk. 11. 41

2 Cor. 8.
8, 24.

that must sanctifie our Possessions; our *unrighteous Mammon*, which otherwise *will not be clean to us*. 'Tis the parent of honour, safety, prosperity without us; of joy, peace, confidence within us; the greatest comfort both in life and death, as being the surest evidence both of our grace here, and our glory hereafter.

'Twill be but a little while before every one of you shall be called to *give an account of your Stewardships*; and would it not be your wisdom, before that time, to have a right state of your Accounts, and to examine how they stand? I am sensible that I speak to men of experience, such as by their constant way of dealing, must needs be well versed in things of this nature; and do thoroughly understand what belongs to the making up, and adjusting of Accounts; how to put together the charge, first of what they have received, and are responsible for; and then the discharge, how it hath been laid out and expended. And I appeal to your Consciences, Can you think this would be a good account at the last day to say, Lord, thou hast intrusted me with so many Talents, such a revenue in Land, such a stock
in

in Money and Commodities, such an income by Trading, or by Offices, to the value, it may be, of some thousands or hundreds by the year. Of which receipts I have expended, *Imprimis*, for my own use in *building, furniture, apparel, feasting, recreations, law-suits*, and perhaps some more vicious way of expence, so many *hundreds*. *Item*, for thy use and service towards the relief of thy poor Members, to works of devotion or publick bounty, either so many *blanks*, or so many *pence*.

If men would deal impartially with themselves, putting both these together, and compare them with one another; would not this be enough to shame and confound men, if they were but serious in Religion, and did in good earnest believe what they profess.

When we come to die, the remembrance of those sums, though but small ones, which we have sent before us to Heaven in works of bounty and charity, will be a greater comfort and support to our Minds than all those vast treasures which we must leave behind us upon Earth. If men do not believe these things, why do they pretend to be Christians? If they do believe them, how is

it possible they should walk so unanswerably to them ?

Oh ! that what hath been said might prevail with some amongst you, to enter upon a firm resolution of altering the state of your Accounts for the future, by reducing these two General Heads for *your selves*, and for *God*, unto a more decent and equal proportion ; that the one may not consist only of *pounds*, and the other of *pence*. That so much at least may be laid out upon good works, as may afford to your Faith and Hope some ground and *foundation to lay hold on eternal life*.

The

The Eleventh Sermon.

LUKE VII. 5.

*For he loveth our Nation, and hath
built us a Synagogue.*

AMongst the many Passages in the *Gospel* concerning those miraculous Cures, which were wrought by our *Saviour*, this of the *Centurion's Servant* is upon several accounts one of the most remarkable.

We have it recorded in *two* several *Evangelists*, by *St Matthew*, *Chap. 8.* and *here* by *St. Luke*. The *first* of these studying brevity and conciseness in the relation of it, doth thereupon omit several circumstances specified by the *other*; whence there ariseth some seeming inconsistency betwixt them. From which the *Pagans* and *Manichees* of old,

took advantage in their Objections against the truth of the Gospel.

The chief circumstance wherein the difference lies, is concerning the persons who came unto Christ. In *St. Matthew* 'tis said, that the *Centurion* himself came, *beseeching of Christ*, vers. 6. and *answering of him*, v. 8. And in this place 'tis said, that the *Centurion* first sent the elders to him, v. 3. and after his friends, v. 6. And part of their message is, *Neither thought I my self worthy to come unto thee*, v. 7.

*Matt. 10.
42.*

Several things are answered to this Objection by those who write concerning the Harmony of the *Evangelists*. The most common Solution is, That what is done by a man's Proxy or Messenger, may be ascribed to a man's self, *Apostolus cujusque est & quisque, He that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me*. Christ is said to have preached peace to the *Ephesians*, *Ephes. 2. 17.* and repentance to the old World, *1 Pet. 3. 19.* which he did not in his own Person, but by his Messengers.

Others conceive, That the *Centurion* first sent the *Elders of the Jews*, whose commission was only to beseech cure for his Servant: And when upon their request

quest our *Saviour* was pleased to come towards his House, then he sends some other Friends to deprecate that trouble, and to let him know, that he was not so presumptuous as to expect or desire any such favour from him: But when notwithstanding this Message, our *Saviour* still kept on his way towards his House, then at last the *Centurion* himself comes out, and tells him, That he is altogether unworthy to have so great a Guest come under his Roof.

This being very suitable to all the circumstances of the Story recorded by both *Evangelists*, doth sufficiently reconcile the seeming difficulty about it.

So that the *Text* is part of that Message which was sent to our *Saviour* in behalf of the *Centurion's* Servant. For the better understanding of the Words, and the Story to which they refer, it may be proper to premise something concerning these four Particulars.

1. The *Person* sending.
2. The *Message* or Errand.
3. The *Messengers* employed.
4. Their *Success*, or the issue of this Message.

1. The *Person* sending, is here described by various circumstances; His *Calling*,

ling, *Religion*, those special *Virtues* for which he was eminent.

1. His *Calling* or Profession. A certain *Centurion*, v. 2. A Military Officer, one of those Captains who were quartered up and down the several parts of *Judea*, to prevent any Commotions or Seditions amongst the *Jews*, whilst they were under the *Roman Government*; And 'tis likely that his Garrison or head-Quarters were at *Capernaum*, the place where this Miracle was wrought.

2. For his *Religion*, he was neither *Jew* nor *Christian*, but a *Heathen*; acknowledging no other Principles but what the Light of Nature might lead a man unto; whereby men are obliged to renounce Idols, to worship only the one true God, to observe the Rules of Justice and Charity, dealing so with others, as they desire to be dealt with themselves. Which Rules are particularly enumerated under seven Heads, stiled by the *Rabbins*, the *Seven Precepts of Noah*. And the observance of these was then counted sufficient to entitle a man a *Profelite*; of which there were two kinds amongst the *Jews*, called by them *Profelites of the Covenant*, and of the Gate. Those

Those were called *Proselytes of the Covenant*, who took upon them the Sign of it, namely *Circumcision*, and did submit themselves to all the *Jewish* Rites enjoined by *Moses*. And all such of what Nation soever, who were thus fully converted to that Religion, were afterwards counted as Native *Jews*, and admitted to the same common Privileges, and to worship with them, both in the times of the *Tabernacle*, and of the *Temple*. Such was *Uriah*, &c.

Those were called *Proselytes of the Gate*, who during the time of *Solomon's* Temple, stood only without at the Gate, not being admitted within the *septs* or Inclosures of it; though in the *second* Temple there was an outward Court appointed for them, called *Atrium gentium*. These were neither circumcised, nor observed any of the *Mosaical* Rites, but only those Precepts of *Natural Religion* which I mentioned before. And of these there were some in all Times amongst the *Jews*, and usually great numbers in all Cities and Places of the *Gentiles* where the *Jews* had Synagogues. Such was *Naaman* the Syrian, in the *Old Testament*; *Cornelius*, and the *Centurion* in the *New*. In the
History

History of the *Acts of the Apostles*, there is frequent mention of these kind of *proselites* under the title of *σεβόμενοι*, *worshippers*, or *devout persons*, chap. 13. 43; 16. 14; 17. 4, 17; 18. 4. who also were the first *Gentiles* converted to *Christianity*.

And though there was a wide difference betwixt the *Jews* and these *Proselites* in Matters of Religion, yet did it not grow up to any such heats and animosities betwixt them, but they lived peaceably together. As for the *Jews*, though they were by the *Law* obliged to esteem such persons as *Gentiles* and unclean, with whom they might not familiarly converse; yet were they willing upon account of their virtue to allow them some share in their good opinion and friendship; esteeming them to be pious men, and such as (according to their opinion) should be admitted to some portion of happiness in the other World. And the *Apostle* says of some of them, that *they feared God*, *Acts* 10. 1, 2. and *Chap.* 13. 16.

And on the other side, these *Heathen Proselites*, though they did not believe the *Jewish* Religion, or submit to the Rites of it, yet because they found the Principles of it more rational than any other,

other, in the prohibiting of all Vices, in their worship of one God, and being free from Idolatry, which all other Nations were guilty of; therefore had they a greater esteem for the *Jews* than for any other; frequenting their *Synagogues* to hear the *Law* read and expounded, and being ready to oblige them by any bounty and favour, whereby they might testify a peculiar respect to them, as being devout and religious men.

3. As for those special *virtues* recorded of this *Centurion*, there are observable in the Story of him these *four* things, for which he was eminent.

1. His great *tendernefs* and *pity* towards his sick Servant, who is said to be *dear to him*, v. 2. though 'tis probable that he was but a Slave, either bought with his Money, or taken amongst the Spoils of War; for such kind of Servants were then most usual with the *Romans*, especially amongst Military Men; yet you see how full of compassion he is towards him in his Sicknefs, how solicitous for his recovery, making all the interest he could, and engaging his chief Friends to mediate in his behalf; And from his being thus merciful we may probably

probably infer, that he was likewise a man of courage and valour. For as fierceness and cruelty is a sure indication of a Coward, so gentleness and humanity are usually arguments of a great and generous mind.

2. His *modesty and humility*. Though others that knew him, had a great esteem of him, yet had he a mean opinion of himself; *Neither thought he himself worthy to come unto Christ*, v. 7. He knew that the *Jews* did count themselves polluted by any familiar converse with such as he was; and much less could he think himself worthy to receive any such honour from *Christ*, as that he should vouchsafe *to come under his roof*.

3. His *bounty and generosity* in works of devotion, manifested by building a *Synagogue* for the *Jews*, erecting for them a place of Publick Worship at his own charge, which was a matter of no small expence.

4. His great *Ingenuity* of Mind in submitting to sufficient evidence. Having been informed of those great Miracles wrought by our *Saviour*, and that holy Doctrine which he taught, he is immediately convinced that he must needs be a Divine Person. And accordingly he makes

makes his address to him suitably to this belief, expressing his Faith in such a way as hath no other Instance like it in *Scripture*: His request is, *Say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.* And if he should have said, I do not think it fitting either for me to ask, or Christ to grant, that he should vouchsafe to come and see my Servant, or to lay his hand on him; 'twill be sufficient if he shall please to speak the word only. And he gives this reason for it, For if *I who am but a man under authority*, have such a power over those committed to my charge, as to make them *come and go* at my command, much more then may he send away Diseases by a word of his mouth. For *I am a man*, thou art a *Divine Person*; I am *set under authority*, thou art the *supreme Lord* of all; *I have Soldiers under me*, a rough untractable generation of men, and yet when *I say to one, go, he goes; and to another come, he comes; to a third, do this, he does it;* Now Sickneses and Diseases are thy servants, under thine absolute dominion and command, to be disposed of as thou pleasest; and therefore as I am not worthy to come unto thee, nor is it fitting for me to expect that thou shouldst vouch-

vouchsafe to come unto me; so is neither of these necessary to the grant of my Petition, *'Tis but saying the word, and my servant shall be healed.* Upon this Message our Saviour seems to be somewhat surprized; 'tis said, *he marvelled at him,* and having made a stand, he turns about to the people that followed him, and said unto them, *I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel,* v. 9.

2. The Business or Message; which was to intercede with Christ for cure of a sick Servant. And this, those who were imployed on this account did accordingly endeavour with much earnestness, pressing their request with arguments taken from the great merit and commendation of the Person in whose behalf they did intercede; which they express *first* in the general, saying, *he is worthy for whom he should do this,* v. 4. and this they further specify by two particular instances: 1. From his *publick spiritedness,* *He loves our Nation;* he is not a person of the common temper, of a little narrow mind, immersed wholly in himself, or given up to some small designs for his own private gain and advantage. 2. His *bounty and generosity* in Works of Devotion, *He hath built us a Syna-*

Synagogue. What by the help of his Soldiers, and his own expence, he hath very liberally erected for us a place for publick Worship; which must needs be a great obligation to those who had any zeal for their Religion; and is accordingly made use of as a powerful motive of favour towards him.

But here, before I proceed any further, it may be proper to speak something for the clearing up of this Question, How it comes to be recorded as a commendable thing for a man *to build a Synagogue*, when we find no command or institution for it in Scripture? And therefore it may seem to be a kind of *Will-worship*, or Humane Invention, which may as well be said likewise concerning our Churches in these Times of Christianity. We read indeed of a glorious *Tabernacle*, and after of a stately *Temple* appointed by God himself. All the *Parts*, *Ustensils*, *Services*, *Officers*, and every other *circumstance* belonging to that Worship, being particularly determined in *Scripture*. But we read nothing at all of any command concerning *Synagogues* or *Churches*.

To this it may be answered, That the having of particular Places set apart

Z

for

for the Duties of Publick Worship, is of natural obligation, and therefore doth not require any positive Law for the commanding of it. Though such kind of *Ceremonial* and *Typical* Precepts, as are no way derivable from Natural Light, do receive all their obligation from being *instituted*; yet in things that are *moral*, which a man may be acquainted with, and obliged unto by the meer Light of Nature, in such cases a man is left to the Dictates of Reason and Prudence.

And from this Natural Principle was it that the ancient *Patriarchs*, who lived abroad in Booths and Tents, frequently changing their places for fresh Pasture, when they came to any new place of abode, where they pitched their Tents, their custom was to erect Altars, and enclose them about, which was usually done in some *Mountains, High Places, and Groves*. And these (before they came to be abused by Idolatry) were in general request amongst them, being styled by the name of Sanctuaries, or Holy Places, to which a reverence is commanded, *Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my Sanctuaries*, Levit. 19. 30.

Chap. 25.

31.

Jer. 9. 11.

Lam. 2. 7.

When the *Israelites* wandered in the
Wilder-

Wilderness without any settled Habitation, they were commanded to make a moveable *Tabernacle*, before which they were to worship, *Exod. 26.* And before that glorious *Tabernacle* was erected, *Moses* had a *Tent without the Camp* for that purpose, called the *Tabernacle of the Congregation.*

When they were to be in a settled condition, they are then commanded to *fix unto the place which the Lord their God should chuse*, *Deut. 12. 5.* After, when God had chosen *Jerusalem*, and in it *Mount Moriah*, *David* did first, out of his own inclination, make an attempt towards this work of building the *Temple*, which was afterwards accomplished by *Solomon.* And that *Temple* being destroyed, another was erected in the room of it, which (though it fell much short of the former) yet was it one of the most noble and famous Structures in the whole World.

Each of these, the *Tabernacle* and the *Temples*, were by particular appointment. In after times we read of other kinds of Buildings for Worship, *Synagogues* and *Oratories.*

Synagogues were somewhat answerable to our *Parish-Churches*, in which

they were wont to assemble for Prayer, Reading, and interpreting the Law.

The *Oratories* or *Proseuchæ* were lesser Structures, commonly erected without the *Towns*, and by the Sea-side: into which it was usual for Passengers to enter for Praying, and giving of Alms.

When *Synagogues* began first to be erected, is very difficult to determine. The most common opinion is, that there were no Buildings of this kind till after the *Captivity*. As for that Phrase, *They have burnt up all the Synagogues of God in the land*, Psal. 74. 8. the Original word translated *Synagogues*, is מִקְדָּשׁ which is frequently used in other Scriptures to signify *tempus statutum*, or *stata solemnitas*; according to which the meaning of it must be, that they have abrogated the solemn *Festivals*, and caused them to cease: 'Tis so rendred by the *Chaldee Paraphrase*, the *Septuagint*, and most of the other *Versions*. And whereas St. James saith, *Act. 15. 21. Moses of old time had in every City those that preach him, being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath-day*. To this it may be answered, that the Phrase of *old time* is not necessarily to be extended unto the times of purest Antiquity, but may be well

well enough restrained to four or five hundred years preceding, when *Synagogues* might first begin, *namely*, after the *Captivity*. But of this I have had occasion to treat more largely in another Discourse.

Only this is sufficiently evident, that the liberty of building *Synagogues*, was allowed every where to the *Jews* under the *Roman* Government in our *Saviour's* time; that he himself and his *Apostles* did very much frequent them, and consequently approve them; that though the several Officers and Laws belonging to them were without any *Scripture institution*, yet our *Saviour* doth rather suit the Doctrine and Precepts of *Christian* worship to this of the *Synagogue*, which was *moral* and perpetual, than to that of the *Temple-service* which was *instituted* and transitory.

As for publick Buildings for *Christian* worship, 'tis obvious that this *Way* being in the first Ages every where opposed and spoken against, the Professors of it were fain to meet (as they could with safety) sometimes in private Houses, belonging to some of the *Disciples*, where they had usually a fair upper room furnished and set apart for these Meetings,

and sometimes in *grotts*, and *caves*, and *woods*: 'Till afterwards, the heat of persecution being somewhat abated, they had permission to build little *Oratories*; and in process of time, as *Emperors* and *Kings* began to favour *Christianity*, so were they careful to erect for them most sumptuous and magnificent *Temples*. For which this *Land* and *Nation* of ours was more particularly famous above any other part of the *World*. Our *Ancestors* having been very devout and bountiful in works of this nature, according to the old *verse*:

Anglia, mons, pons, fons, Ecclesia.—

Now though it be true that where ever men worship God with a sincere and upright heart, they shall be accepted; *Jeremy* in the *mire*, *Jonah* in the *Whales belly*, *Daniel* in the *den*, the *three Children* in the *Furnace*, the *Thief* on the *Cross*; yet this doth not hinder but that when we have opportunity for it, our *Places* of publick Worship should be both built and maintained, and esteemed in some measure suitably to the dignity of that service they are to be imployed about. And when we are in a prosperous

rous estate, 'tis as proper for us to worship God in the *beauty of holiness*, as it is to do it in *Caves* and *Prisons* when we are in a condition that doth necessitate us thereunto.

You have heard the two *first* Particulars, the *person sending*, and his *message*. I shall speak more briefly to the other *Two*.

3. The *messengers* employed about this business, which were of *two kinds*. Those who were first sent, are said to be the *Elders of the Jews*, v. 3. whether the *Magistrates* of the *City*, or the *Governors* of the *Synagogue*, the *Civil* or *Ecclesiastical Rulers*, is not evident; the Word may signify either. After these, 'tis said, *he sent his friends*, v. 6. who were perhaps some other of his fellow-Officers belonging to that *Garison*. And these Messengers (it should seem) were heartily concerned in the good success of that business they undertook, as appears by their earnestness about it: 'tis said, that they did beseech Christ, *απεδελως*, v. 4. *instantly*, with much importunity and vehemence, thereby testifying their zeal and good affection for the Person by whom they were employed,

4. And *lastly*, the *success* or issue of this *Negotiation*: 'Tis said that our Saviour did upon the first motion condescend to their request. Though at another time when he was twice solicited in the behalf of the *Nobleman's* Son, he refused to go, *Joh. 4. 46.* yet to shew his special esteem and favour for a person under so worthy a *Character* as this *Centurion*, he doth express his willingness, not only to gratify him in the thing desired, the healing of his Servant, but to do more for him than was asked, namely, to give him a visit; besides that large testimony and approbation which he gives to the people concerning his great worth.

So much shall serve for the opening of the Text and Story. The *Observation* I would make from the Words is this;

To be of a publick spirit, and of a bountifull generous mind in Works of Charity and Devotion, is a sure way to render a man acceptable to God, and approved of men.

It was by these *virtues* that the *Centurion* (though a *Heathen*) was so much
 endear-

endeared to the *Jews*, and so well accepted of by our Saviour.

And the *Scripture* doth attest to this truth in several other places. 'Tis said *Psal.* 112. 6. of the bountiful man, *that he shall be had in everlasting remembrance;* and v. 9. *His name shall be exalted with honour.* In conformity to which it hath been always a custom amongst the *Jews* in their speaking of any worthy man deceased, to add this clause to the mention of his Name, *whose memorial is blessed.*

1 *Chron.* 29. when *David* had persuaded the people to offer willingly and freely towards the building of the *Temple*, see how they did all rejoice and exult in the apprehension of it, v. 9. *Then the people rejoiced, and David the King also rejoiced with great joy, because they had offered willingly, and with a perfect heart unto the Lord.* They looked upon this work as a thing that was very well pleasing to God, and an honour to their Nation, and consequently a just occasion of joy and triumph to all the People.

When *Nehemiah*, *Chap.* 13. 14, had with great industry and success promoted the rebuilding of the *Temple*, he doth,

doth, upon the reflection of it, break out into this expression, *Remember me, O my God, concerning this ; and wipe not out the good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the Officers thereof.* It seems he believed his care and activity in this work to be a thing very acceptable to God ; which makes him desire that it might be recorded and kept in remembrance to his advantage.

I might further confirm this *Observation* by several Reasons. I shall mention only two.

1. From the suitableness of such kind of duties unto the moral and more substantial parts of Religion. The *Apostle* tells us, that *the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink ; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost ; and they who in these things serve Christ, shall be accepted with God, and approved of men,* Rom. 14. 17, 18. The Word *Righteousness* is frequently used in the Scripture-phrase for the virtue of Beneficence and Bounty. By *peace* is meant that gentle and charitable disposition, whereby a man is inclined to promote the quiet of Societies, and good will amongst men. And by *the joy in the Holy Ghost*, we are to

to understand an ability to rejoice in an afflicted estate. These are the things recommended to us, as being the more weighty and essential parts of Religion. 'Tis no difficult matter for a man to be zealous about *meats and drinks*, he may do it to gratify his contentious humour, and to endear himself to a Party: Nor is it hard for a man to pretend a zeal for Religion by some good Wishes or kind Words, which are cheap things, and will cost him nothing; but to give testimony of it by bountiful actions, *that others may see our good works*, this is that which will make them *glorifie God in our behalf*, and acknowledge *that he is in us of a truth*. It was an humour in the *Apostolical* times, as well as since, that men set up for Reputation in Religion by their zeal about some Opinions in lesser matters. Against which the *Apostle* cautions *Titus*; *This I will, that thou affirm constantly, that they which believe in God, be careful to maintain good works*. For which he gives this reason, *For these things are good and profitable unto men*. Contentions and Disputes may please and gratifie mens present humours and passions, but they are these works of Piety and Bounty that must

Tit. 3.

must promote the more lasting and publick welfare, and the general good of mankind.

2. Persons thus qualified are supposed to be of an higher rank and degree above other men. It is in Religion as in other Professions; there are some of a Vulgar sort, of an ordinary and common standard; and there are others of a taller stature, of a higher form and attainments, from whom it may be expected that they should adorn and add a luster to their Profession. And they are the Virtues of this kind, namely a bountiful and charitable disposition towards any publick good work, that must raise Men to this higher pitch of esteem above others. When *Araunah* offered *David* freely his *threshing-floor*, and *oxen*, and *threshing-instruments* for Sacrifice, 'tis said, that he *did it as a King*, 2 Sam. 24. 23. in a royal and princely manner; and *David* on the other side refused it *as a King*, thinking it unworthy of him to offer unto God of that which cost him nothing, v. 24.

I shall add nothing further at present by way of confirmation of this Point. That which I chiefly aim at is the Application of it.

I have

I have purposely made choice of this Subject, as having a peculiar suitability to the present state of things in this place. God hath been pleased by his late severe dispensations, first to destroy the Inhabitants of this City by the noisome Pestilence, and since to lay waste our Habitations by a dreadful Fire; wherein his own Houses, those that were dedicated to his Worship, did not escape; But *the devouring fire* (in the phrase of the *Psalmist*) *did come into his Sanctuaries, casting down the dwelling-places of his name to the ground; burning up the Synagogues of God.* And amidst the other dismal ruins of this place, 'tis one of the saddest Spectacles to behold so many *Sacred Structures*, the Monuments of our Forefathers devotion and bounty, laid in the dust.

Psalm. 74.
7, 8.

I suppose it needless to prove the necessity of Religion to Government, or the necessity of places for publick Worship to the keeping up of Religion. Those things are in themselves so plain and obvious, that no reasonable man can have any just cause to doubt of them. That which I aim at is, to excite others by this example of the *Centurion* to such a love of their Nation and City,

City, as may engage them to some effectual care for the building up of our *Synagogues*.

And in order to this, I would speak something. 1. *Particularly* to such as are *Magistrates*. 2. *Generally* to all sorts of people.

1. To you that are *Magistrates* of this City: 'Tis one of the styles belonging to your Offices, to be *repairers of breaches*. Publick things ought to be taken care of by publick persons. You have already made some provision to preserve mens Proprieties in their grounds, to enlarge the passages and avenues, whereby the City may be rendered more safe, beautiful and convenient for Trading; which are good works, and such as become worthy *Magistrates*: But these things concern you as you are men and Citizens; there are other things to be provided for as you are Christians: And I would crave leave to be your remembrancer, That some effectual care may be taken for the rebuilding of the Places for publick Worship. It would be very convenient, that as several *Parishes* are built up, so the repair of Churches should be in some forwardness, to which the Inhabitants might resort

resort for the Duties of Religion. The doing of this will perhaps prove a matter of too great charge to be defrayed by the contribution of the Inhabitants, considering their particular losses. But if any considerable help could be procured for it from the Publick (which there is no reason to doubt of) the remainder might be made up by particular Charities. And both together might prove sufficient for this great work. Nor is there any reason to question, but if this business were seriously consulted, and vigorously pursued, such ways might be offered as might prove effectual both for the building of such a number of *Churches* as shall be thought sufficient, and likewise for the providing of a sufficient maintenance for them, that none of their *Incumbents* may be put to live precariously upon the benevolence of their Hearers. I humbly offer this to your consideration, as a thing that is your duty, and will tend to your honour. And I do the rather mention it now, because this is the proper season for it, while the *Parliament* is sitting, of whose assistance towards so pious and necessary a work, there is no reason to doubt. And because it will
be

be a business of some time, and much consideration, to enumerate and digest all such particulars as are necessary to be provided for, and establish'd by Law ; therefore will it be requisite that this work should be timely set about, that there may be sufficient leisure to deliberate and consult about the due management of it.

2. More generally to all sorts of people ; that they would lend their helping hands to so good a work as this is. If this *Centurion* in the *Text*, in a state of *Heathenism*, under his more dark apprehensions of Religion, was so forward in these works of publick bounty, much more then will it concern us that are *Christians*, not to be backward or defective in them. I might (if the time would permit) press this with great variety of arguments ; I shall mention only some few.

1. 'Tis our *duty* to be bountiful and liberal upon all good occasions, and may of right and justice be required of us. God is pleased indeed for the better encouragement of men to these things, to style them *Gifts* and *Loans*, which he engages himself to repay ; but they are *Rent*, and *Tribute*, and *Debt* ; upon the due

due payment of which we hold our Possessions, and upon the neglect or non-payment we forfeit our right to them. He is the supreme Lord of all, we are but his Tenants. As in the times of the *Law* men were to acknowledge his right and dominion by the offering of Sacrifice; so should they in these times of the *Gospel* by their liberal contributions towards any good work, *for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* When there is any good occasion offered for our Bounty, that is the time for the paying of out Rent and Tribute, and God doth then require it of us.

2. 'Tis our *Interest*, a thing which upon several accounts tends to our advantage and benefit.

1. With respect to our safety: The bountiful man shall be *delivered in the time of trouble, preserved from his enemies, strengthened upon the bed of languishment, Psal. 41. 1, 2, 3.*

2. 'Tis a means to promote the interest of our estates: *The liberal man deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand, Isa. 32. 8. (i. e.)* He shall by this means be established and improved in his Estate. *The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be*

A a

water-

watered also himself, Prov. 11. 25. Such kind of works are in the Scripture-Phrase compared to sowing, which is always in order to an harvest and increase, And he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully, 2 Cor. 9. 6.

3. This will promote the interest of honour and esteem amongst others: *A bountiful man shall be had in everlasting remembrance, and his name shall be exalted with honour, Psal. 112. 6, 9. Every one is a friend to a man of gifts, Prov. 19.*

4. This will be a means to render our Prayers and other Services acceptable, and to entitle us to the Divine favour. 'Tis mentioned as an argument of God's designing mercy and kindness to his people, when they became duly affected at his displeasure against them in the ruin of their Temple, and were willing to engage in the repair of it, *Psal. 102. 13, 14. Thou wilt arise and have mercy upon Sion, for the time to favour her, yea the set time is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.* That Psalm is thought to be composed by Nehemiah, when he designed the repair of the Temple; and he mentions this as a ground of hope, that God would now at last be
favour-

favourable to his people, because they were affected with a sad resentment at the ruins of the *Temple*, and a zeal for the repair of it. Where 'tis implied, to be a mournful spectacle to see the *Temple* of God lying in the dust, under decay and ruin; and an argument of God's favour to a people, when he puts it into their hearts to restore such ruins.

There are several things which men are apt to pretend as *Excuses* from such kind of Duties: As,

1. *The fear of want for themselves;*
To this the *Scripture* answers, that *such as are bountiful shall not lack*, Prov. 28. 27.

2. *They must lay up for their children:*
Why? he that is merciful, *his seed shall be blessed*, Psal. 37. 15.

3. But they are but of a mean condition, being put to labour hard for a poor living. Neither should this exempt men from works of Charity. The *Apostle* exhorts men to labour with their hands

for this reason, *that they may be able to give to such as need*, *Ephes. 4. 28.* This indeed will alter the case as to the measure of such mens Bounty, but will not totally excuse them from it. *Goats hair,* and *Badgers skins,* were heretofore esteemed a suitable gift for the poor of the people. A brother of low degree may be allowed to give *πειδουμένως, sparingly;* and a *mite* shall be accepted from a poor Widow. But those who are rich in this World, should be rich in good Works also, such were to bestow *purple,* and *gold,* and *jewels.* And in this sense is that Scripture to be fulfilled, *that to whom much is given, of them much shall be required.* There being no kind of cavil or exception apt to rise up in the hearts of men against this Duty, but the *Scripture* doth in several places purposely obviate and answer it.

Exod. 35.

2 Cor. 9. 6.

I have only this one word to add, That we must all of us shortly die, and after a few days are past, must go to the place whence we shall not return. And when we come to lie upon our Death-beds, then the remembrance of our Pious Bounty and Charity,

rity, and of the *good deeds we have done for the House of our God*, will minister more comfort to our Minds, than all the vast Treasures that we can leave behind us upon Earth. Which consideration were enough to persuade any one to this Duty, who is but serious in Religion, and doth in good earnest believe what he professeth.

THE HISTORY OF THE

... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...

... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...

... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...

... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...

... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...
... of the ...

The Twelfth Sermon.

PROV. XXV. 15.

—A soft tongue breaketh the bone.

THE Book of the *Proverbs* is a Miscellany of Sentences, full of various and profound Wisdom; such ruling *Sentences*, ¹⁷⁰⁰as are fit to have a special authority over a man in the guidance of his affairs. They concern all kind of matters, the *customs*, *vices*, *humours* of men, the various *businesses* and *conditions* of life. *Quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas; Gaudia, discursus.*

And because there is no greater evidence of wisdom (which is the thing here professed to be taught) than the due regulating of our *words* and *speeches*, therefore is there no other subject which the *Wise man* doth more frequently insist upon, than this. And 'tis one of

A a 4 his

his *Proverbs* of this kind that I have now made choice to treat of.

Amongst the many other Rules and Qualifications to be observed in the government of our Words, that of *mildness* or *meekness*, both as to the *matter* and *manner* of them, is one of the most considerable.

And there is a special elegance in the *Text* to this purpose; 'tis one of those *Proverbs* that doth consist both of *Similitudes*, and *Antitheses* or oppositions, every word in it is figurative and metaphorical. The reducing of them to their plain and natural significations will sufficiently unfold the meaning of them, and may serve for Explication.

1. By *Tongue* we are to understand the Speech or Discourse, by a *Metonymy* of the *cause* for the *effect*.

2. By the *softness* of it, is meant that kind of disposition which is answerable to tenderness and yieldingness amongst tactile qualities, when a thing doth not resist the touch, so as to be offensive to it, but doth rather gently yield and give place to it. 'Tis styled elsewhere by the name of *smoothness*, and compared to *butter* and *oyl*, Psal 55. 21.

It

It may comprehend under it these four general Virtues.

1. *Meekness*, *ωερότης*, 1 Pet. 3. 15. *Be ready to answer every one with meekness and reverence*; which is that virtue whereby we are to restrain the anger of our words.

2. *Gentleness*, *ἐπιείκεια*, *moderation, candor*, Tit. 3. 2. *Speak evil of no man; be no brawlers, but gentle*; whereby we relax from the highest extremity of things, and do abate of saying the utmost we might.

3. *Courteousness* or *affability*, *φιλόφρονες*, 1 Pet. 3. 8. *Be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling, &c.* *ὁ τὰ φίλα φρονών, qui sapit amica.* When a man endeavours to speak things benign and grateful, in whom there is a facility or accommodateness for human converse.

4. *Kindness*, Prov. 31. 26. the *Law of Kindness* is said to be *in the tongue* of a virtuous person. The original word is *רַחֲמִים* which signifies properly *benignity, mercifulness, benevolence*. The saying or doing more in the behalf of others, than in strictness we are obliged unto.

These are the several Virtues comprehended under the metaphor of a *soft tongue*.
The

The *Opposites* to it are described in Scripture by these other expressions,

1. *Hardness*, in opposition to *softness*, 1 Kings 12. 13. 'tis said that *Rehoboam* answered the people *hardly*, as 'tis properly rendered in the *Margent*, in the Original חִדְדָה in the *Septuagint* σκληρα, the same *Greek Word* that in the 15th verse by *St. Jude* is translated *hard speeches*; it denotes properly things that are harsh, stiff, rigorous; 'tis the same *Hebrew word* with that which is rendered *churlishness*, 1 Sam. 25. 3. *Nabal* is there said to be an *evil and churlish person*, a difficult intractable man, such as no art or industry could make pliable, or manage to any good purpose, as may be easily guessed by the manner of that answer which he returned to *David's* Messengers.

2. *Roughness*, in opposition to *smoothness*, Prov. 18. 23. *The poor useth intreaties, but the rich answereth roughly.* חִזְקָה fortia, robusta, sæva, boisterousness, imperiousness, that which is opposite to the meekness of obsecrations and intreaties.

2. *Sharpness*, under the comparison of *swords*, and *arrows*, and *stings*, and *razors*, that which is apt to pierce and wound

wound men, instead of that opposite quality of *Healing*, which there should be in a virtuous tongue.

4. *Bitterness*. We read, *Pf. 64. 3.* of *bitter words*; and *cursing* is styled *bitterness*, *Jam. 3. 10, 11.* and *Rom. 3. 11.* they are both put together as being *synonymous*, whose mouth is full of *cursing* and *bitterness*. Amongst other kinds of *evil speaking*, the Apostle reckons *bitterness*, and *wrath*, and *anger*, which are prohibited, *Ephes. 4. 31.* 'tis styled by this name, because it hath such a kind of effect upon the *mind* of others, as this quality of *bitterness* hath upon the *palate*, to constringe and nauseate it. *For the ear tasteth words, as the mouth tasteth meats.*

5. *Clamor*, *ἡρῶν*, *noise*, loudness; which is likewise forbidden in that fore-cited place, *Ephes. 4. 31.* because 'tis usually an indication of some such eager passions as do not become a sober and prudent man, and are not suitable to the spirit of Christianity.

6. *Brawling*, *Tit. 3. 2.* to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *ἀμαχη*; it signifies a verbal pugnacity, an aptness to wrangle and contend in words, to *smite with the tongue*.

And

And so much shall serve for *explication* of the *Metaphor* of *softness*, together with the *opposites* to it.

3. By the word *bone*, is meant that kind of *hardness* which is opposite to this *softness*, that is, surly, fierce, untractable passions or dispositions; or else such with whom, by reason of their place and distance, 'tis difficult for a man to prevail, as is implied in the former part of the verse, *By long forbearing is a Prince persuaded*.

4. By *breaking*, is meant persuading (as in the forecited clause) pacifying, convincing, appeasing, prevailing with. In brief, it signifies the subduing and taking away the proper effect of hardness; which is to resist and oppose any thing that it meets with. Now things that are hard, are not usually broken, but by such bodies as are more hard than they; so that herein lies the proper elegance of the *Text*, that the *tongue*, which is a fleshy, tender, and weak part, should by the *softness* of it, be able to *break* that which is the hardest of all the rest, the *bones*; and yet so it is, that a meek and gentle way of discourse is the most effectual means to overcome the fiercest passions, and most obdurate cruel dispositions.

positions. And that is the true sense of the Words, stript of their *Metaphors*; and 'tis the *Proposition* I intend to prosecute.

There are several other Scriptures to this purpose, *Prov. 15. 1. A soft answer turns away wrath.* By *wrath* is meant the height and intention of anger; a soft answer is prescibed as the best way to divert and appease it: *Be ready always to give an answer, with meekness and reverence, 1 Pet. 3. 15.* and then it follows in the next verse, *That those who speak evil of you, and accuse you, may be ashamed.* A calm and gentle way in vindicating our selves, is the most effectual means to work confusion in such as would calumniate and reproach us. 'Twas St. Paul advised this, *2 Tim. 2. 25. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, τὴς ἀντιδία δευδύας*, though they be such as set themselves against us. As his practice was accordingly. *Euodias* and *Syntiche* were two Women in the Church of *Philippi*, who (it should seem) were at variance betwixt themselves) St. Paul might have made use of his Apostolical Authority to have stated the difference, and to have rebuk'd the offending party; but he rather chuseth
this

this more effectual way of entreaty; and perhaps they were both in fault: *I beseech Euodias, and I beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord, Phil. 4. 2.* But the great power and efficacy of this will better appear, by the several instances and examples to this purpose recorded in Scripture.

Gen. 32. we have a Story of *Esau's* meeting his Brother *Jacob*; *Esau* was a rough man as well in his inward disposition, as his outward behaviour and way of living, and 'tis probable by his bringing four hundred men with him, that he came with a purpose of being revenged, and killing his Brother *Jacob*, according to his former resolution, *Gen. 27. 41.* but those mild and humble expressions of *Jacob* in stiling him *Lord*, and himself a *Servant*; that message he sent by the men who were to convey the droves, ver. 20. *Behold thy servant Jacob is behind us, for he said, I will appease him with a present, and afterwards I will see his face, peradventure he will accept of me.* These speeches did so soften the rugged and inflexible disposition of *Esau*, that instead of taking revenge, he offers his Brother kindness.

Judg.

Judg. 8. 1. When the men of *Ephraim* did enter into a high contest with *Gideon*, and did chide with him sharply, as the *Text* hath it, he did by his mild and gentle answer, allay their heat; *Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? then their anger was abated towards him, when he said that, v. 3.*

1 Sam. 1. Old *Eli*, who was mild more than enough towards his wicked Sons, yet very severe in his censuring of *Hannah*, when he tells her she was drunk, *v. 14.* she might have replied, that he wronged her, and that she was no more drunk than himself; but she rather chuses to answer, *Not so my Lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit, I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord; count not thy handmaid for a daughter of Belial, ver. 15, 16.* Upon this mild answer of hers, the old *Prophet* saw himself mistaken, and for his rebuking, he now blesses her, *Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition, v. 17.*

What a kind of temper *Saul* was of, how full of passion and fierceness and cruelty, doth appear by several instances; what an enmity he had against *David*,
with

with what ardor and impatience he did desire his ruin, may likewise be evident from his secret underminings, and his open pursuit of him ; and yet this harsh and cruel disposition of his, is strangely wrought upon by the mild and humble carriage of *David*. When he had cut off the Skirt of his Garment, *1 Sam. 24.* and thereby testified his fidelity to him, in that he had refused an opportunity of hurting him, when it was in his power ; styling him, *My Lord, and my Father, the Lord's Anointed, the King of Israel*, in comparison to whom himself was but as a dead Dog, or a flea, *v. 14.* 'Tis said this did immediately so melt and dissolve that stony heart of *Saul*, that he lift up his voice and wept, *Animus sanguinis & cædis sitientem repente ad lamenta & ejulatus compulit*, saith one of the *Fathers* : Whereas before he thirsted for nothing so much as blood and slaughter, now he is so effectually wrought upon by this mildness, as to break out into tears of kindness and pity. And now he returns him a gentle answer, *Is it thy voice, my Son David, v. 16.* Whom before he prosecuted as his chiefest enemy, now he acknowledges for a Son, and commits to him (as if he

Chrysost.

he were his dearest friend) the care of his posterity. *V. 21. Swear now therefore unto me, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, not destroy my name out of my Fathers house.*

1 Sam. 25. There is another pregnant example to this purpose. When *David* was in a great chafe and fury against *Nabal*, and in the heat of his passion had taken an Oath to kill all that belonged to him, *v. 22.* for that churlish and taunting answer returned by his Messengers ; then doth *Abigail* by her soft and gentle speeches mollify and allay this passion, she fell at his feet and said, *Let thy handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience. v. 24.* She acknowledges the fault, that he had deserved better from *Nabal* ; beseeches his pardon, and tells him, that *it will hereafter be no grief or offence of heart unto my Lord, that thou hast not shed blood causeless, or avenged thy self, V. 31.* By which she presently reduced him to a coolness and temper, made him gentle as a Lamb, who was before fierce as a Lyon. When our Saviour called the *Caananitish Woman Dog*, we know how her humble and gentle answer prevailed with him, for the success of her petition.

Matth. 15.

B b

And

And it may be pertinent to this purpose, though it be in a Parable, what we read *Matth. 18. 23.* of a certain King who called his Servants to an account, and finding that one of them owed him ten thousand Talents, commanded him to be sold with his Wife and Children, and all that he had, who thereupon *fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.* Ye know the issue of this humble demeanor; 'tis said, *His Lord was moved with compassion towards him, and forgave him his debt, v. 27.*

Thus much shall serve for Scripture Testimonies and Examples to this purpose. I proceed to the further confirmation of this truth by two *Reasons.*

1. From the *nature of these fierce passions*, and this obduracy or hardness of temper, which are encreased by opposition, and consequently must be abated by gentleness and yielding. The collision of two bodies that are hard, will be apt to strike fire betwixt them, which cannot be done when one of them is soft. Wrath is oftentimes compared to fire; now the way to extinguish fire, is not by blowing it, or adding fewel to it, but rather by withdrawing

drawing that by which it is supplied : And it was a wise saying of the Son of Sirach, Ecclesiasticus 8. 3. *He that striveth with a man of tongue, heaps wood upon his fire ;* and again chap. 28. 12. *If thou blow the spark, it shall burn ; if thou spit upon it, it shall be quenched , and both these come out of the mouth : i. e.* such words may be spoken as may either *in-* flame the anger of others, or *extinguish* it ; and of what kind these must be, may be easily known by what I have been discouraging. I appeal to every man's experience ; Did you ever know any man convinced or converted by this wrathful boistrous way ? doth it not rather alienate mens minds, and set them at a further distance ? true indeed, it may be a means to fright some meaner timorous spirits to a seeming feigned compliance, to make them disguise their enmity, but it will never work them over to a hearty conviction, and make them true friends. With what reason can any man expect those counsels should be effectual, which are delivered in such a way as to argue a hatred and contempt of the persons whom we would persuade ? Though a man be supposed to have the truth on his side,

and should be able to urge very cogent and strong arguments for the proof of it; yet if they should be pressed with scorn, and harshness, and bitterness, the *reason* of them would not so much enforce, as the *passion* of them will weaken and disparage them: It will undoubtedly be the most effectual way to put *hard* arguments into *soft* words.

2. From the *nature of Lenity* and gentleness, whose property it is to insinuate it self into the hardest things. 'Tis compared to *Oyl*, which will penetrate and supple more than any other liquor. He that goes about to convince and perswade another, if he doth so manage it, that it may appear he intends kindness to the person whom he would prevail upon, that he hath a love for him, and doth heartily desire his welfare, his work is half done. That prophecy *Psal. 45. 4. Ride on prosperously, because of the word of truth and meekness*, doth refer to the Doctrine of the Gospel, and the Kingdom of Christ, which by the meekness of its professors, was first propagated, and became triumphant through the Heathen World. The true nature of things may be more clearly distinguished, when there are
no

no mists or clouds stirred up by the heat of contention. Many differences might be half reconciled, if they were but mildly debated. It was not perhaps without some mystery, that *Noah's* dove brought an *Olive-branch* in her mouth, to shew the mutual dependance betwixt these two, *mildness*, and *peace*. 'Tis the end of anger to bring men to a sense of their fault, or be revenged upon them for it; now a meek submission is one way of satisfying this end. Besides, that mild and gentle carriage will discover the weakness and deformity of rage and fierceness, and in that respect may be a means to break it in others.

This expression in the Text concerning the hardest things being broken by the softest, may perhaps contain in it an allusion to that ordinary experiment of breaking of Flint upon a Pillow, and a Sword upon a Feather-bed; when the concussion of a blow is more equally dispersed into all the parts of the body, so as to operate upon the weakest. It is *Hippocrates* his counsel, that a Physician should always be provided with *μαλάγματα*, *Lenitives*, gentle mollifying applications, as being of frequent use

and great efficacy ; and they are so no less to the *minds* and passions of men, than to their *bodily diseases*.

Before I come to the *Application* of this Point, there are these *three Questions* to be spoken unto for the clearer stating of it, How this Doctrine may consist with,

1. Those *Imprecations*,
2. Those severe *Increpations*,
3. The duty of *zeal* and reproving.

Obj.

1. For the imprecations and Curses. We have frequent examples of these in Scripture, not only against sin in general, as those pronounced in Mount *Ebal*; but likewise against particular persons. They are frequent in the *Psalms*, and especially that 109. *Psalms*; and in the *New Testament* likewise, St. Peter to *Simon Magus*, *Acts* 8. 20. *Thy money perish with thee*. St. Paul to *Elymas*, *Acts* 13. 10. and elsewhere to *Alexander the Copper-smith*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 14. and he wishes *they were cut off that trouble the Church*, *Gal.* 5. 12. Besides the many woes which are denounced by our Saviour himself against the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*. Now the Question is, How these examples may consist with this Doctrine concerning *soft words*?

To

To this, several things may be said by way of Answer and Solution, which the time will not permit me to insist upon; I shall only mention these few.

1. Divers of these *Imprecations* in Scripture, though they are pronounced *optatively*, yet are they to be understood *declaratively*, as being declarations of the true state and condition of such persons. They are *Verba prædicationis, non vota imprecantium*, as St. *Austin* speaks. The *Hebrew* Phrase in those places which are rendred as *Imprecations*, being as well capable of the *Indicative* future, as the *Imperative* Mood and Sense.

2. Those who used these *Imprecations*, were such as were extraordinary Persons, endowed with the Spirit of discerning, whereby they were enabled to judge of the incurable state of those with whom they conversed. There are some that are *curst Children*, as the *Apostle* speaks, 2 *Pet.* 2. 14. *κατάρας τέκνα, filii maledictionis, execrandi homines*, and to such curses are reserved as their due portion: And therefore no wonder though such as had an extraordinary Spirit of discerning their true state, do use imprecations against them,

which yet can be no warrant for other persons to imitate. As none but the Magistrate may use the Sword for revenge, because of his publick station and calling, whereby he is authorized for it ; so none but extraordinary Prophetical men should use these maledictions. If others shall presume upon it because of their example, they will justly fall under the rebuke of our Saviour, *Luke 9. 55. You know not what spirit ye are of.* The ordinary rule prescribed for mens practice, is that of *Matth. 5. 44. Rom. 12. 14. Bless, I say, and curse not.*

3. We are to consider the motive or affection, upon which such imprecations as we read of have proceeded; which were not carnal, or rash anger or desire of revenge in reference to any particular hurt or injury against themselves, the usual occasions of them in other men ; but Spiritual and Divine, respecting the interest and cause of God, and zeal for his glory. In our own cases we are taught to be patient and long-suffering, praying for our persecutors.

4. The wishing of evil directly to any under the notion of evil, must needs be malice, and can never be lawful ;
Not

Not but that 'tis lawful to pray for such things as by way of consequence will necessarily imply a blasting and kind of malediction upon the attempts of others, which is no way inconsistent with the true happiness of their persons. The wishing of such kind of temporal evils, as tend to the preventing of greater evils, or else are to be inflicted by way of correction and vindicating of Divine Justice, are not opposite to the rules of Charity. 'Tis lawful for us to wish conditionally some temporal evils upon our selves by way of correction and restraint from sin, that God would rather afflict us, than suffer sin upon us; and consequently we may wish the same to others, the love of our selves being the rule and measure of our love to others. Of this nature was that petition, *Psal. 83. 16. Fill their faces with shame, O Lord, that they may seek thy name.* This is not to pray against them, but for them. We may likewise pray against the unjust actions and attempts of our enemies, *Acts 4. 29. And now, O Lord! behold their threatnings;* but not against their persons. Mr. Perkins speaking concerning this Question, in his *Cases of Conscience*, concludes it to be

be unlawful for a man to pray against the person of the *Pope*, though he should believe him to be the *Antichrist*, but only against his *Antichristian* state and regiment, whereby he set himself against the Kingdom of Christ. As for the imprecations of *David* that are sometimes repeated out of the *Psalms*, they are by us to be used, either as the Historical part of Scripture, or else as being directed against the kingdom of sin in general, and the obdurate implacable enemies of God; or as being a kind of Prophecies, wherein the punishment and revenge of such is foretold.

2. Obj.

2. How may this Doctrine of mild and soft words consist with those severe *Increpations* in Scripture? Doth not our Saviour call the Pharisees, *Serpents*, and *generation of vipers*, Mat. 23. 33? and *Herod* by the name of *Fox*, Luk. 13. 32? Doth not the *Apostle* stile some among the *Philippians*, *dogs*, Phil. 3. 2? *Beware of dogs*; and the *Galatians*, *Fools*, 3. 1?

Ans.

To this it may be said, 1. That such Prophetical men as have an extraordinary spirit of discerning, whereby they are able to judge the true state of others, may use such hard words towards them, which it may not be lawful for others

to

to imitate, as was said before concerning imprecations. 2. Those that are in a publick station, or in such a superior relation to us, as doth authorize them to correct and punish us, may likewise chide and reprehend us with severity; but not such as are of a private condition, or have no superiority over us.

3. How may this consist with the duties of *zeal* and *reproving*, which ought sometimes to be done with severity, *Rebuke them sharply*. He that saith, *Be angry and sin not*, doth seem to suppose that a man may sometimes sin, in not being angry, when by his sinful silence and lenity, he either really doth, or else seems to consent unto, and be partaker with others in their offences? 3. Obj.

To this it may be said, That 'tis not the nature of these things to oppose, but to regulate one another. We read, *Jam. 3. 13. of meekness of wisdom*, that is, such a wise mildness as will direct a man how to order his zeal and rebukes, both as to the degrees, objects, occasions, and manner of expressing them. That's a bottomless boundless charity and severity which extends alike to all persons and offences. Let the proper objects of these be duly distinguished, Ans.
and

and these graces may very well consist together, and be subservient to one another. When the matter we are to speak to, doth require any special indignation, it should appear to proceed from the zeal of a displeased friend, rather than the bitterness of a provoked enemy. It should seem to argue too much levity, for men to accustom themselves to an *Ironical* and jeering way of rebuking others; nor is it so suitable to that awful reverence which men should be affected with in the discharge of their Ministerial employments. And it will be too much rashness to check men in a passionate revengeful manner.

Appl.

For the *Application* of what hath been said, I will infer these few *Corollaries*.

1. If soft words be of such a prevailing efficacy upon men, above such as are wrathful and harsh, then soft and gentle *Actions* must be so too. Words being of no other force than as they denote our inward thoughts, or outward actions. We read *Hos. 11.4.* of the *bands of a man*, and the *corde of love*; implying, that to such as have not put off the nature of Humanity, there can be no such powerful obligation as that of kindness.

2. The

2. The folly and sinfulness of hard speeches, to which may be reduced cursing, reviling, upbraiding, scoffing or taunting, brawling, masterliness, or imperiousness of speech, ostentation, scorning, charlishness and roughness, or any other the like dispositions, whereby others may be provoked to anger and offence; which will not become any man that pretends to Christianity in his ordinary converse, much less Ministers, and least of all in the discharge of this solemn duty. *Nugæ in ore sacerdotis sunt blasphemia.*

3. The lawfulness and fitness of giving men the reverence and honour in respect of their proper Titles, just praise and other civil respects, belonging to their places and degrees. Against that melancholick generation of men, of late risen up amongst us, who place so much of their Religion in being unmannerly; than which nothing is more disagreeable to the light of nature, or to the precepts and practice of Scripture. The Apostle exhorts, *Rom. 13. 7.* that we should render to all their due, fear to whom fear, and honour to whom honour is due. And *1 Pet. 2. 17.* We are enjoined to honour all men, that is, to give every

MAN

man that due esteem, both in our carriage and words, which according to the rules of justice or charity, may belong unto him in respect of his *place*, or *abilities*, or *condition*. The compellations of *Lord* and *Father*, are frequently used in the *Old Testament*, by way of civil respect to thole in a superior condition. *Paul* and *Silas* did not give any check to the *Jaylor*, *Acts* 16. 30. when he stiled them *Kύριοι*, *Sirs*, *Masters* or *Lords*. *St. Luke* uses the Title of *most excellent Theophilus*, *Luk.* 1. 3. When *St. Paul* was to speak publicly for himself before a Civil Judicature, he doth with all imaginable softness insinuate himself into the good liking of his Judges, by acknowledging his own happiness, in that he was to plead before a Person so *learned and expert in all the Customs and Questions among the Jews*, as King *Agrippa* was, *Acts* 26. and afterwards when he was interrupted in his speech by *Festus*, by that rugged and reproachful passage, in telling him *he was mad*; He makes a soft and submissive answer to him, *I am not mad, most noble Festus*.

As for that Objection, *Mat.* 23. 8, 9. *Call no man Father upon earth, neither be ye called Masters*: This cannot refer to those

those Titles of respect, which concern Natural or Civil Relations, because these words were afterward frequently used by the *Apostles* in this sense; but they must refer to that signification of the words, wherein they were given to the leading-men of the *Pharisees*, whose Dictates and Traditions were to be received without any examination or dispute, as if they had a *masterly* or *paternal* power over the faith of men; and in this sense *God only is our Father or Master*.

3. For the Reprehension of such as are apt to be transported unto bitter and provoking words. This is very *unmanly*, as being against the rules of *Morality*, and very *unchristian*, against the precepts of the *Gospel*. Though others should begin with us by provoking language, yet 'twill not be proper for us to return the like; this were to draw the saw of contention, which must needs make a very harsh ungrateful noise to any sober hearers. 'Twere more noble to yield to our adversary in this kind, than to subdue him; whereas if you do not give place to him, you must give place to anger, and that is to give place to the Devil.

That whereby men use to cover and excuse their infirmities in this kind, is the
Ephes. 4. 26, 27.
 pre-

pretence that it is the sins of others by which they are provoked to use so much sharpness to them; and against sin men ought to be zealously angry.

There are two Considerations I would suggest to such: 1. Have you any zeal against your own sins? do they fasten upon your thoughts with any displeasure and trouble proportionably to the injuries you suffer from men? To pretend that your zeal is against the sins of others, when you have little sense of your own, must needs be hypocrisy. 2. If it be a sense of the sin and fault of others, that you are so affected with, then you will be willing to use the most effectual way for the redressing of it, which is by such kind of reproofs as proceed from love, not anger or revenge, such as may convince, not exasperate. Let it be supposed that the thing you contend for is truth, yet you must ἀληθεύειν ἐν ἀγάπῃ, *follow the truth in love*. If one man may be fierce and severe because he is in the right, why then another man that doth but think himself so, will be so too; and at this rate, what would become of peace, and society amongst men?

4. I proceed to a word of *Exhortation*, to periwade us unto that kind of softness and lenity in our speeches, which is here commended.

1. From the *sinfulness, danger, mischief* of the contrary disposition in a threefold regard.

1. As to the *effect* of it. 'Tis quite opposite to the other. *As a soft tongue breaks the bone*, so an hard tongue will be so far from breaking that which is hard, nay or so much as that which is soft, that it will rather render it more obdurate. *Grievous words will stir up anger*, even amongst men of gentle and peaceable dispositions. *David* was a man of a meek and humble spirit, and yet what transport of fury was he under upon the churlish answer of *Nabal*? And though at another time when his spirit was low, and he was under great affliction, he did with another kind of temper endure the revilings of *Shimei*; yet that made an impression upon him afterwards, and his followers were under no little indignation upon it, as may appear by that speech of *Abisba*; *Why should this dead dog curse my Lord the King? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head*, ver. 9. When the people

Prov. 15. 1.

1 King. 12.

4.

were assembled at the Coronation of *Rehoboham*, professing their readiness to serve him, and beseeching him to make their yoke lighter, upon his answering of them roughly, you know what a mischievous consequence happened.

2. The *Punishment* belonging to it. There are many severe threats and judgments denounced in Scripture against *hard speeches*. *Psal. 12. 3. The Lord will cut off the tongue that speaketh proud things.* Pride is the principle of this hardness, as humility is of softness, *Mat. 5. 22. Whosoever shall say to his brother, Racha, i. e. whosoever shall out of anger call him vain empty fellow, shall be in danger of the Council, or the punishment of stoning; whosoever shall use any more virulent opprobrious expressions, and call him fool, shall be in danger of the Vivicomburium, to be burnt alive, (i. e.) there shall hereafter at the last judgment be such a kind of gradation in the punishment of these sins, as there are for the most Capital offences among men. One of the principal things that men shall hereafter be condemned for, when the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his Saints to execute judgment, is their hard speeches, Jude 15.*

3. 'Tis

3. 'Tis an indication of a rough and unbewen spirit, not reduced from its natural ferity and savageness; not polished by education, not tamed and made gentle for civil converse. *A fool will upbraid churlishly, Eccles. 18. 18.* 'Tis for a *Nabal* to use hard words. All kind of cruelty is commonly an argument of cowardice. There is not usually a surer sign of an inveterate ill nature, than the habit of sharp provoking speeches. Witness the Son of *Sirac, Eccles. 23. 15.* *The man that is accusom'd to opprobrious words will never be reformed all the days of his life.* 'Tis the work of a *Shimei* and a *Rabshekah* to revile, who upon that account are infamous to a *Proverb*. 'Tis observable, that in the distribution of the Tribes, betwixt mount *Gerizim* and mount *Ebal*, for the work of blessing and cursing; those Tribes for the most part were appointed to stand upon mount *Ebal*, who were the children of the bondwomen, less noble and generous than the rest, and so the fitter for this harsh and servile work.

2. There are other motives to this purpose, to be derived from the benefit and advantage of soft words, besides the efficacy and power of them.

Prov. 31.
26.

1. They are of great Ornament ; which should be a prevailing motive. Men usually put an high value upon , and take great pains for those abilities which will render their speech graceful and acceptable, to which nothing will contribute more than this. Upon which account the Scripture stiles it by this name ; that very Word which in one place is called *kindness of the tongue*, in another place is rendered *goodliness*, Isa. 40. 6. *All flesh is grass, and the goodliness, &c.* implying, that nothing is more comely and graceful than this.

2. Its *suitableness to our profession*, from the pattern set us by our Lord and Master. *Meekness was the grace of his lips ; when he was reviled, he reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not,* 1 Pet. 2. 23. He was mild and gentle towards his betrayers, accusers, condemners, crucifiers. *As a sheep before his shearer.* And he hath prescribed our imitation of him in this, as the surest way to *find rest for our souls*, Mat. 11. 29. 'Tis for dogs and swine to bark and tear, and bite one another ; Christians are, or should be, sheep and lambs.

In brief, 'tis a qualification this, that is usually an indication of wisdom and great-

greatness of mind, 'tis profitable to human society, acceptable to God, pleasing to men, advantageous to our quiet, honour, safety, and therefore upon all these accounts may justly challenge our care and study.

I have been forced to run over some of these things but slightly, for fear of being tedious. And Oh that what I have said might effectually prevail with men, *to lay aside all that bitterness and wrath, and evil speaking*, which persons of different persuasions have in all times been prone to ; that we might in this kind unanimously join our hearts , and tongues, and pens, to promote the publick peace and prosperity both of Church and State. What kind of importunities and obsecrations should we not use towards one another for this end? But men can but speak to the ear, 'tis God that must speak to the heart ; let us beseech him, the God of all patience and comfort, that he would bestow upon us soft hearts, and soft tongues ; that he would *set a watch before our mouths , and keep the door of our lips ;* that upon the experience we have had, of the mischief of mutual exasperations, we may now every one of us apply our

selves to the most effectual means for composing the spirits of men, and healing their differences; that laying aside all other povocations, we may make this our business, *to consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works.*

The End of the Twelfth Sermon.

The

The Thirteenth Sermon.

PHIL. IV. 5.

Let your moderation be known unto all men, the Lord is at hand.

TH E S E Words are among several other precepts and counsels which seem to have no connexion with one another, and therefore I shall handle them absolutely without any reference to the Context.

And there are these three parts considerable in the words :

1. A *Duty* enjoined, *Moderation*.
2. The *extent* or manner of its being exercised, it must *be known unto all men*.
3. A *reason* or argument to enforce it, *The Lord is at hand*.

I have sever'd the *Text* into these parts for the more orderly explication

of the several *Terms* contained in it.

I. Concerning the *virtue* enjoined, your *Moderation*, τὸ ἑπιεικὲς ὑμῶν. In the Original 'tis an *Adjective* put *Substantively*, wherein there is a peculiar elegance and *Emphasis*. The *Syriac* and *Arabic* render it *mansuetudo*, meekness. The *Vulgar*, *Arias Montanus*, and others, *modestia*, modesty, a composedness of life and manners. The *Aethiopic*, *Autoritas vestra*, your Authority; for which there seems to be very little ground in the signification of the word. Others *Humanitas*: Our old *Translation* did render it by the word *Patience*. And the same original word is by our *present Translation* so rendred, 1 *Tim.* 3. 3. Not given to filthy lucre, but patient, ἀλλ' ἑπιεικῇ sometimes 'tis translated *clemency* or *courtesy*, *Acts* 24. 4. sometimes *gentleness*, 2 *Cor.* 10. 1. *Titus* 3. 2. *Jam.* 3. 17. 1 *Pet.* 2. 18.

The *Hebrews* express the same notion by three words, derived from the root רשׁ, רחם, רשׁ. The one signifying *re-tribution*, the other *readiness to pardon*, the other *Peace*.

Aristot.
Ethic. lib.
5 cap 10.

The *Philosopher* in his *Ethicks*, where he treats particularly of it, makes it to be a *species* or branch of *Justice*, where-
by

by we are directed and inclined to supply that by right reason, which is not provided for in the words of the written Law. Because 'tis not possible in the making of general Rules or Laws to foresee all such particular cases and circumstances as may happen. Therefore that habit whereby a man is enabled and inclined to deal according to the equitable sense of the Law, and to allow for such particular circumstances as may make a real difference in several Cases, this is stiled *ἑμενεια* or *equity*, which is a moral *virtue* placed betwixt the two extremes of *Ἀκριβοδυνασιον* *rigor*, or *summum jus* on the one hand, insisting too much upon the letter; and *relaxatio nimia*, remitting too much from the true sense of it, on the other hand. Now both these extremes, the excess and the defect being evidently vices, it must thence necessarily follow, that the *medium* betwixt them must be a *virtue*, and have in it the obligation of a duty.

So that he who in those things which the Lawgiver could not particularly provide for, doth judge according to the equitable sense of the Law, is *ἑμενεις* an equal Magistrate. And he who in such a case is willing to depart from his
own

own strict right, out of compliance with that meaning which the Legislator would in such a case have particularly determined could he have foreseen it, is *homo æquus*, as a private person.

But now besides this forinsecal notion of the word as it refers to positive Laws, and the dispensation of justice, there may yet be another more general sense of it, with relation to all kind of differences and contests amongst men, whether in matters of Opinion or Interest; wherein they should demean themselves towards one another with such a kind of temper as may be mutually best for all, and may in the various changes and revolutions of things, most promote the good of mankind. And so 'tis a virtue inclining us to such a kind of benign and equitable temper in our conversing with one another, whereby we may endeavour to preserve concord and amity in our treating concerning those things about which we differ.

There are some virtues that go under several names, and yet are of the same family and very near of kin, being differenced rather *modally* than *specifically*, from the quality and condition of the *person* by whom they are to be exercised.

So

So the same virtue which in the generality of men we call *meekness and gentleness*, this in superiors is stiled *clemency*, which is *lenitas superioris adversus inferiorem*. Not that it hath any different form or act, but is only distinguished by the object towards whom 'tis exercised, namely, towards those of an inferior rank. And thus it is with this *ὑποταγή*, which is a kind of meekness, with this peculiar difference, that it refers more especially to matters of controversy, and doth always incline to the most amicable and gentle way in judging of, and accommodating of things, and such a prudent relaxation of the utmost rigor, as right reason shall direct according to the variety of cases and circumstances.

And this I conceive to be the most proper notion of this word, according to its true scope and extent. There are several other virtues of affinity to it, being either fruits or concomitants of it, which I may have occasion to speak of afterwards.

II. The *Second* particular observed in the words, was the *extent* or manner of this virtues being exercised, it must be *known unto all men*, which phrase may signify these three things. I. Those

1. Those *manifest* and real *proofs* we are to give of this Virtue ; which must be such as may be seen and *known unto all men*. It must not only be internal as to our temper and frame of mind, but external too in all our dealings and carriage towards others.

2. That it be *signal* and eminent as to the *degree* of it, as being one of those properties whereby Christians are to be distinguished from other Professions and Sects of men in the world. Their *light* must *so shine before men, that others seeing their good works*, may speak well of them. They must *adorn the doctrine* they profess, by such a demeanour as may win over others to a love of it.

3. That it be *universal* as to the *extent* of it, both in regard of the *Acts*, *Objects* and *Occasions* of it, by shewing equity and moderation in all businesses, towards all persons, as well inferiours as superiours, the unconverted *Gentiles*, and the contentious *Jews* ; that neither of these may have any just ground *to accuse our good conversation*. 'Tis no difficult matter for men to be fair and kind, and moderate towards such as are of the same way, and agree with them in the main. This is but a common and low attain-

attainment, and is not thank-worthy, doth not deserve any peculiar commendation. The rules of Christianity do oblige to a greater extent of it, *namely*, that it should be towards all men.

III. The *Third* particular observed in the words, is the *reason* or argument to enforce this duty, *The Lord is at hand*, *ἔγγυς* *propè*, he is near. Which phrase is capable of various senses. It may refer either,

1. To his presence with us, and knowledge of our actions. He always looks on, and takes notice what our carriage and demeanour is; whether it be with that gentleness and equity towards others, as his is towards us. He observes all our ways, and therefore we had need to demean our selves as being under his eye.

2. Sometimes this phrase of God's being near, doth refer to approaching judgments. So the time of the destruction of *Jerusalem* is stiled the *coming of the day of Christ*, when he should execute temporal judgments upon his enemies. Upon which account *St. John* stiles that age by the name of *ἡ ἡμέρα τῆς ὥρας*, *the last hour*, 1 *Joh.* 2. 18. So likewise is that place interpreted, *Heb.* 10. 37.

Te

Ye have need of patience, for yet a little while, μὲν ὅσον ὅσον, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. The scope of it being to comfort them that were ready to fall off from Christianity; upon the persecution of the *Jews*; amongst whom the *Hebrew Christians* lived.

3. He is near in respect of his coming to judgment, and that in a twofold respect.

1. In regard of every man's particular judgment at the time of his death. 'Tis but a little while that we are to continue in this world, we must shortly die, none of these lesser things are worth our eager contention. We should so demean our selves at the present, as may bring us comfort at the last.

2. In respect of the general Judgment. That time cannot be far off, *The end of all things is at hand*, 1. Pet. 4. 7.

Rev. 1. 3.

& 22. 10.

He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. The Judge is at the door, Jam. 5. 9.

There are several passages in the *New Testament*, which seem to intimate as if the *Christians* in the *Apostles* times did expect that this day should come before the end of that generation. Which *St. Paul* doth caution them against, 2 *Thes.*

2. 2. *Be not soonshaken in mind, or troubled, as if the day of Christ were at hand.* So near at hand it was not. The belief and expectation of that, as if this were the sense of those Prophecies concerning it, might upon the disappointment of it, prove a temptation to Unbelief and Apostacy from the Christian Faith: And therefore the *Apostle* thinks fit to rectify that mistake, and prevent the further progress of it. But yet since no man knew when that day and hour would come, Christians ought always to demean themselves as if it were at hand, and to live in a continual expectation of that time when Christ shall come to judge the world, and to vindicate his Saints: When he shall *render to every man according to his works*, to them who by a moderate demeanor of themselves, amidst the various conditions of this life, and by a patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour, eternal life. But to them that are violent and contentious, tribulation and anguish, Rom. 2. 7, 8. And therefore there is upon this account very good reason why our moderation should be known unto all men.

The

The words thus explained will afford this *Observation* :

'Tis the duty of Christians to give signal testimony of their equity and moderation upon all occasions of difference and contest with one another : Not to insist upon the utmost rigor of things, but to be ready to comply with all such gentle and prudent expedients, as may help heal and accommodate the differences amongst them.

Though this word *Moderation* do but seldom occur in Scripture, being scarce any where else used but here : yet that which is the substance and meaning of it, is frequently commanded, and the contrary thereunto prohibited, under different expressions in other places of Scripture. This some conceive to be the sense of that place, *Eccles. 7. 7. Be not righteous over-much, neither make thy self over wise, why shouldst thou destroy thy self? (i. e.)* insist not upon the utmost extremity of things, as if it were wisdom to take all the advantages you could from the strict letter of the Law. This were the readiest way to *destroy your self*, by teaching other men to do the like against

gainst you; there being no safety for any one, if every one must use another according to the utmost rigor. *Prov. 19.*

11. *It is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression.* Men may think to get the repute of strictness and zeal by being rigid and severe towards the failings of others: But 'tis a much more glorious thing to shew gentleness and forbearance towards them; It argues a man to have a noble and generous mind, and a real sense of humanity.

There are several other expressions to this purpose in the *New Testament*. As *Ephes. 4. 1, 2.* *I beseech you that ye walk worthy of that vocation wherewith ye are called, in all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love. V. 32. And be ye kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

Phil. 2. 3. *Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves, v. 14.*

Gentleness is reckoned as the fruit of the Spirit, *Gal. 5. 22.* A mark of that wisdom which is from above, *Jam. 3. 17.* an inseparable property of the servant of

the Lord, who must not strive, but be gentle, shewing all meekness to all men, 2 Tim. 2. 24.

Finally Brethren, have compassion one of another, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendring evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing, 1 Pet. 3. 8, 9.

It were easy to back these preceprs by several examples out of Scripture. That of *Abraham's* carriage in the contest betwixt him and his Nephew *Lot*, who for peace sake was willing to recede from his own right, and give him his choice, that *there might be no strife betwixt them, because they were brethren,* Gen. 13. 8.

That of our *Saviour* in his yielding to pay tribute for the avoiding of offence, to which in strictness he was not obliged, *Mat. 17. 27.* He was the great *Exemplar* as of all others, so particularly of this Christian grace. *I beseech you brethren by the meekness and gentleness of Christ,* 2 Cor. 10. 1.

St. Paul himself was as eminent for the practice of this duty, as for the pressing of it upon others: In his *becoming all things to all men,* 1 Cor. 9. 22. and in *pleasing all men in all things, not seeking*

ing his own profit, but the profit of many that they might be saved, 1 Cor. 10. 33.

Suitable to this was that carriage of the Council of the Apostles, Act. 15. in their not insisting upon the strict right of things, but accommodating those Controversies of the Primitive times about the Jewish Rites, by such a Moderate expedient, as might most effectually heal and compose those differences.

There are two kinds of Reasons by which I would confirm the necessity of this duty; In respect of God, and Man.

1. In respect of God. { 1. He is at hand.
2. He deals so with us.

1. He is at hand; which is the Argument in the Text, *He is near*, being always about our paths, and about our beds, he spies out all our goings. He observes our carriage, to animadvert upon our failings, to assist and relieve us in our necessities, so that we need not fear any prejudice from others upon this account. If they shall from our Moderation be so much the more ready to injure us, He will be as ready to vindicate and reward us. Psal. 76. 9. He will arise to

1. Reas.

judgment, to save all the meek of the earth, here in this life. But besides, he is *near* in respect of that *final judgment* and account he will call us unto at the last :

Either { 1. *Particular.*
2. *General.*

1. *Particular* at every man's death, that time cannot be far off. When a few days are come we must all *go to the place whence we shall not return.* Then all other things will forsake us and vanish away, and nothing will be of any real value to us, but the conscience of well-doing, which will go along with us, and abide with us for ever. Men are here apt to put the greatest estimate upon those things that concern their secular interests and advantages, whereas such matters will be of little use to us then : And 'tis usually mens being immersed in these lesser designs about some worldly selfish advantage that makes them more eager and fierce about other matters of difference.

They that are of a narrow contracted soul in respect of their possessions, have not usually any largeness or generosity of mind in reference to opinion.

2. He is *at hand* likewise in respect of
of

of his *general* judgment; when he will not only *judge the world in equity*, as the *Psalmist* speaks, *Psal. 98. 9.* but for their equity likewise; when there shall be a particular account required of men for their works of *Mercy, Kindness and Pity*, and according as their carriage hath been in these respects here, so shall their condition be hereafter; when there shall be special notice taken of mens severe and rigorous demeanor in beating and insulting over their fellow-servants. How can such persons answer it then, when they shall expect mercy for themselves, and yet have not been ready to shew it to others? God hath told us that he will not forgive us here, without this readiness to forgive our brethren; and therefore we have no reason to expect it from him hereafter.

2. Which brings me to the *second* branch of this *first* Reason, We should deal so with others because *God deals so with us*. He is kind to the *unthankful and the evil*. Be ye therefore merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful: 'Tis our Saviour's inference, *Luke 6. 36.* It were not possible that the world should subsist one moment, if it were not that his mercy did moderate the rigor of his

justice. If he should be *severe to mark what is done amiss, who might abide it?* Every minute we deserve hell, and might expect to be cast into it. It is *because his compassions fail not, that we are not consumed.* He considers what we are able to do and to suffer; *He knows our frame, and remembers that we are but dust;* He chastiseth us with *the rod of a man;* and doth never grieve willingly, or *afflict the children of men:* And all this he doth upon this very ground, that we might from hence learn to deal so with others. The less gentle and moderate we are in our dealings with others, by so much the less sense have we of the guilt and danger of our own sins, and the less experience of God's love and mercy in the pardon of them.

That's a remarkable Parable to this purpose, *Mat. 18. 23.* concerning the Servant who being indebted to his Lord ten thousand Talents, was yet forgiven out of great compassion. After which he did notwithstanding rigorously exact from his fellow-servant an hundred pence. You know what sentence was passed upon him for it, *Serve nequam, v. 32.* *O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all thy debt, shouldst thou not also have had*

had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

The second kind of *Reasons* which I 2. *Reas.* proposed for the enforcing of this Duty, was in respect of *men*, with reference to whom this virtue of *Moderation* will appear to be a thing,

I. Most *reasonable* and fitting in it self, considering,

the { *Fallibility* of humane judgment.
 { *Mutability* of humane affairs.

II. Most *beneficial* and advantageous for the good of men, both in

regard of { Our own private welfare.
 { The good of humane Societies
 in general.

I. 'Tis a thing most *reasonable* and fitting in it self, because of the *Fallibility* of humane judgment: And that not only from the impotence of our faculties, and the prejudices we are liable unto, upon the account of interests, which will strangely bias a man's judgment against clear evidence: But likewise from the difficulty and obscurity of things; there being *δυσκολία* every-
 D d 4 where,

where, not only in Nature and Scripture, but likewise in Political things, and the ordinary concernments of humane affairs, whether matters of Right, or of Fact: the most learned and inquisitive men many times differing in their judgments concerning matters of Right: and as for matters of Story and Fact that are variously reported, if a man hath not been an eye-witness of them himself, it cannot be but that he must give credit to them according to that esteem and opinion which he hath of the persons by whom they are related. All which put together shew how exceeding difficult and next to impossible it is, that men should ever agree in the same apprehension of things. There is no considering man who hath with any serious thoughts reflected upon the common state and condition of mankind in this respect, but must needs own and acknowledge the truth of that Saying, *Pauci res ipsas sequuntur, plures nomina rerum, plurimi nomina Magistrorum.*

The generality of men being carried away by the *Names* of Leaders and Parties, taking up opinions by the bulk and in the gross, as they are owned and professed by that Party of men amongst whom they are lifted. Many

Many are swayed by the prejudice of the Names of things either for or against a thing. If an opinion or a design do but pretend to such a Name, they do accordingly either receive or reject it, without examining how far it doth really promote or prejudice the thing they aim at.

And as for the *Nature* of things in themselves, there are but few, very few, who set themselves to any serious impartial inquiry concerning them.

Now I say, he that considers the manifold mistakes which the judgments of men are liable unto upon these accounts, he must, unless he will go out of the world (as the *Apostle* speaks upon another occasion) demean himself towards others, with this tenderness and moderation as to the things about which they differ.

2. From the *mutability* of Humane affairs, which in their most secure and flourishing estate are subject to revolutions : It being beyond the contrivance of humane wisdom, to establish things unto such a fixedness as shall exempt them from change ; but many times those very courses which wise men take for the settling and securing of things,
and

and which may in themselves have a natural aptitude to that purpose, are by the Providence of God made use of as the means and occasions of trouble and change :

Ludit in humanis divina potentia rebus.

He that hath not yet learnt this lesson upon the experience of all those various revolutions we have seen in these latter Times, may deserve to be taught it, as *Gideon* taught the men of *Succoth* with *briars and thorns*, *Judg.* 8. 16.

Nothing is more obvious to any observing man than this, That when revolutions have happened men make this their security and refuge, that they have in the former state of things demeaned themselves with moderation, and have by many kindnesses and civilities obliged such as differed from them. And this, if any thing can, redounds to their advantage afterwards, especially if they have to do with such as have any true greatness or generosity of mind. Indeed if there were any certain way to fix the state of things unto such an immutable stability as could not alter, it would upon that account be more excusable

sable for a man to act with an uniform vigor and severity against every one that differed. But supposing the meer possibility of change, nothing can be more irrational than to demean our selves so towards others with that harshness and severity as to render our selves incapable of receiving any kindness from them. I do not speak this out of any compliance with that *Machiavilian* principle, which directs a man to engage no further in any good cause than he can safely retreat. Every worthy man should with fidelity and courage assert the cause he is well perswaded of; But it should be without all kind of fierceness and bitterness against the persons of others, with as much forbearance and gentleness as the nature of the thing will bear.

Considering that continual mutability which every condition is liable unto, and which no humane wisdom can foresee and prevent, that kind of demeanor is most rational, which may be most beneficial and safe as to our own particulars, and mutually best for all others. Which brings me to the other Branch of this *second Reason*.

II. This

II. This virtue is most advantageous
for the good of men.

1. In regard of every mans private
quiet and welfare in particular. It will
help to establish a man's title to these
earthly things both with reference to

His { Possession } of them.
 { Fruition }

*Psal. 37. 11. The meek shall inherit the
earth, and shall delight themselves in the
abundance of peace.* Which is afterward
repeated by our Saviour, *Mat. 5. 5. and*
again in another place, *Learn of me,*
for I am meek and lowly, and ye shall find
rest for your souls, Mat. 11. 29. The most
effectual means to attain unto a quiet
state of life with others, is to carry our
selves gently and kindly to them, v. 7.
of this Chapter, *And the peace of God,*
which passeth all understanding, shall keep
your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
1 Pet. 3. 10. The Apostle having exhor-
ted them to be pitiful and courteous, not
rendering evil for evil, or railing for rail-
ing, but contrariwise blessing, he presently
subjoins, *he that will love life, and see*
good days, let him keep his tongue from
evil, let him seek peace and ensue it. And
then presently after, *Who is he that will*
harm

harm you if you be followers of that which is good? No such way to render our lives quiet, comfortable and safe, as to demean our selves with candor and ingenuity towards those with whom we converse: And that not only in respect of the effects and consequences of such carriage, but from the nature of the thing it self; it supposeth a calm and sedate temper of mind. Whereas on the other side, that eagerness and fierceness of disposition, whereby a man is apt to be transported with heats and severity in matters of contest, as it doth suppose such æstuations and storms as are inconsistent with inward serenity, so likewise will it occasion outward trouble and opposition from others. They who are always biting of others, will be in continual danger of being devoured by others, *Gal. 5. 15.* Those two qualities of *hateful*, and *hating one another*, are joined together as usual concomitants, *Tit. 3. 3.* they who are apt to demean themselves as *hating* of others, will thereby be rendred *hateful* to them.

2. This virtue will be very advantageous to the *peace* and welfare of *humane society* in the *general*, which doth very much depend upon the mutual
con-

condescension and forbearance of men towards one another, in the things about which they differ : It being utterly impossible, considering the infirmity and prejudice to which our judgments are liable, that we should always agree in the same apprehension of things. If upon every difference men should think themselves obliged to prosecute matters to the utmost height and rigor, such eager persons may easily from hence be induced to have recourse to Arms rather than such precious things as truth and justice shall suffer ; and being once thus engaged, it will be impossible (if they will act consistently) to end their differences by any accommodation, they must fight it out to the last, till one side be wholly subdued and destroyed. And thus would men grow wild and savage, the benefits of Society would be lost, and mankind destroyed out of the world.

'Tis this moderation and calmness of spirit which takes men off from their natural wildness and ferity, which tames and fits them for society. The less any man hath of it, the more doth he degenerate and draw near to the nature of brute creatures. The true notion of
Gentile

Gentleness and *Nobility* consisting in these kind of qualifications, whereby a man is fitted for a sociable condition.

Now the design of Christianity being to promote the good of mankind, and the peace of Societies, therefore doth the Doctrine of it so frequently insist upon those kind of virtues and graces which are most conducive to this end. And therefore upon all these accounts the truth of the Doctrine will appear very evident, *viz.* That 'tis the duty of Christians to give signal testimony of their equity and moderation upon all occasions of difference and contests with one another.

There remains only one *Objection* to be briefly answered, and I shall proceed to *Application*. 'Tis this,

How may this consist with that zeal and strictness of duty which we are obliged unto?

To this it may be answered: 1. That zeal doth properly consist in an intention of mind, and earnestness of affection in the prosecuting of such things as are our duty, and in opposing such things whereby we are hindered in the per-

performance of our duty. Now supposing moderation to be a duty, a man ought to be zealous for this grace, and against all such persons and things as are enemies and hindrances of it. So that these things are not opposite, but consistent with, and subservient to one another.

And as for that other Branch of the Objection concerning strictness and exactness of duty, from which a man ought not to deviate out of compliance with others. To this it may be said, That strictness is properly a keeping close to the Law. Now 'tis not the naked letter, but the sense and meaning that is the Law. And that man may be said to be most strict in his obedience, who doth most exactly comply with this. A man may violate the Law by observing the Letter, and he may keep the Law by going against the letter.

Now Divine Laws themselves are capable of relaxation, which is the meaning of that Proverbial saying so frequent in Scripture, That God *will have mercy and not sacrifice*. And therefore much more will humane Laws admit of it.

There are these three things I would insist upon in the *Application* of this Point.

1. To

1. *First*, To enquire whether we our selves are such as the *Apostle* doth here require Christians to be.

2. And then *secondly*, if not, that we would endeavour to be convinced of that deformity and mischief which there is in the want of this Grace.

3. *Lastly*, that we would be persuaded to be more careful in the attaining, improving and exercising of this Grace for the future.

1. To enquire whether we our selves are such as the *Apostle* doth here require Christians to be; such as upon all occasions of difference are ready to give signal testimony of our gentleness and moderation. There are these two ways whereby this may be discovered, name-

ly, by the { *Fruits and Concomitants.*
Universality and extent of it.

1. By the *fruits* and *concomitants* of this virtue. Some have questioned whether this word do denote any single virtue, and not rather a complexion of many together. 'Tis certain that there are several other virtues of near affinity to this, such as are either the effects or concomitants of this virtue, by which

E e

the

the reality of it may be known. Of these I shall mention *six*.

1. *Mutual forbearance* towards one another, not taking all the advantages we may have of vindicating our selves, making allowance for the infirmity of those by whom we are injured. *We that are strong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak. and not to please our selves, but our neighbour for his good: For even Christ pleased not himself, Rom. 15. 1.* We are to *comfort the feeble-minded, and to support the weak, 1 Thes. 5. 14*; not to be harsh and rigorous towards them.

2. *A readiness to forgive* and conceal the manifest injuries of others, when either the glory of God or the good of men either publick or private shall require it of us. That very expression which is translated *ready to forgive, Psal. 89. 5.* is by the *Septuagint* rendred by the same word in the Text, *ὀνειδίζω*.

3. *Longsuffering*, both with respect to *Patience* and *Hope*; not easily provoked to passions, being slow to anger; not suddenly tired or discouraged by the continuance of the things we suffer, or the delay of the things we hope for. *1 Cor. 13. 4. Charity suffereth long, and*

is kind. Vers. 7. It beareth all things, hopeth all things.

4. *Benignity*, kindness, courtesy; a readiness to do good, to help and shew favour to those by whom we have been injured; such an affable, amiable carriage as may win upon them; not harsh, scornful, churlish; *overcoming evil with good*; a forwardness to promote love and peace with them, though it be by receding from somewhat of our own right. Being favourable in our interpretation of the words and actions of others. Approving what is good in them; not aggravating what is evil; taking doubtful matters in the best sense; chusing rather to offend by too much mildness than by too much severity.

5. *Æquanimity*, meekness, gentleness; such a sedateness of mind, whereby a man is not easily transported to any high passions; not difficultly appeased, especially upon submission and repentance. Such an evenness and smoothness of disposition, as doth not only serve to attemper anger, but to add a sweetness and placidness to our carriage. An equal state of mind under the variety of outward conditions, without being elated or dejected by them; *Knowing how to*

want, and how to abound. When our hearts are not immersed in any of these earthly things, beyond their real worth and usefulness.

6. And lastly, *Easiness to be intreated*; when a man is exorable without the violence of importunity; Not stiff and tenacious in matters of opinion beyond what the great evidence and importance of things doth require. Managing the business of our converse with others, *without murmurings and disputings*, Phil. 2. 14. This same disputacity, or aptness to contend for victory, is no small occasion of discord amongst men. And on the contrary, this willingness to condescend, not leaning too much to our own understanding, is a special means to promote amity and peace amongst them. This very word in the Text being used by the Apostle, 1 Tim. 3. 3. is there by *Beza* interpreted to be of the same sense with *συγγνωμονικός*, apt to yield and to submit, *non facile contentiosus*, not easily provoked to contentious disputes, nor pertinacious in them.

Let a man look over the whole Doctrine of the Gospel in the *New Testament*, and he shall find that there is not
any

any other virtue or duty whatsoever so often and so earnestly inculcated as those of this nature ; as if our Saviour had designed to fix upon these , as being the grand *Criteria* whereby his Followers should be distinguished from all other Sects and Professions of men in the world.

Now if we desire to make enquiry concerning our own conditions in this respect, these are some of those *Concomitants*, effects, properties, whereby this moderation is to be discerned.

2. Another Rule whereby we may examine our conformity to this precept in the *Text*, is the *Universality* and extent of it ; whether we exercise it towards all men, in all times, upon all occasions. They that are for moderation in the managing of affairs at one time, and yet perhaps at another will look upon it as an argument of disaffection, and stile it by the name of lukewarmness and detestable neutrality, such persons cannot be said to love the *virtue* of Moderation, but the *blessing* and happiness of it. They are only for the passive, not the active part ; to receive it from others, not to shew it to them. And to how narrow a compass

an enquiry by this Rule will confine this Grace, amidst the several pretenders to it, I need not say.

2. In the next place we may hence be convinced of that deformity and mischief which there is in the want of this Grace. It renders a man,

1. *Unlike to God.*

2. *Unacceptable to men.*

3. *Pernicious to himself.*

1. It renders a man *unlike to God*; in conformity to whom all our excellency and happiness doth consist. He is *the Father of Mercies, the God of all consolation*. His appearance was in *the soft and still voice*, 1 *King.* 19. 10, 11; not in whirlwinds and Hurricanes: where there is *spiritus procella*, it proceeds from another principle. Christ is the *Prince of peace*, the great Exemplar of meekness. 'Tis prophesied of him, that he shall *come down like dew on a fleece of wool, like rain on the mowen grass*, *Psal.* 72. 6. He shall not cry, nor his voice be heard in the street, *Isa.* 42. 2. The Holy Ghost was pleased to appear in the shape of a Dove, the emblem of Meekness.

St. Cypr. de
Unit. Ec-
cles.

Simplex animal & lætum, non felle amarum, non morsibus sævum, non unguinum laceratione violentum. The true Church

is

is stiled by the name of the *Lilly amongst thorns* : the Lilly doth not scratch and tear, that's the property of thorns and briars. Christians are the Sheep and Lambs. *Quid facit in pectore Christiano luporum geritas, Canum rabies?* saith the same *Father*.

2. *Unacceptable to men*; as being against that common peace and quiet which 'tis every mans interest to promote. It seems very obvious for men to reflect what thoughts they have had concerning such persons as have been the chief drivers on of several interests, in those wild revolutions we have seen of late; how we have looked upon them as Incendiaries and enemies to publick peace. If it be said, that the case is now altered, and we have a right side; and a good cause; This ought to be most freely owned, and acknowledged with all thankfulness: But yet 'tis farther considerable, that this virtue of Moderation, doth suppose a matter of right and justice. And then besides, the better the cause is, the less need is there of any immoderate rigorous course in the asserting of it. We shall hereby rather prejudice than promote it; by inducing a suspicion, that 'tis not so much truth or

justice as something else that drives us on. And then besides, where would this principle end? if one man may be severe and rigorous because he is in the right: why then another who doth but think himself so, will be so too. And according to this, what would become of peace and society?

Such blustering boisterous tempers as are all for the great river *Euphrates*, which runs with a torrent and a mighty noise, and refuse the still waters of *Shiloah*, which run soft and gently, as the Prophet speaks, *Isa. 8. 6.* such are no friends to peace, because 'tis the latter which is the river whose streams must make glad the City of God, *Psal. 46. 4.* that is, must promote the quiet and flourishing state of the Church, as a Reverend Prelate hath elegantly express'd it: 'Tis the advice of *Seneca*, that men would consider *Utrum mundi status gravior sit, sereno & puro die, an cum fragoribus crebis omnia quatuntur, & ignes hinc atq; illinc micant.* What difference there is betwixt a serene and clear day, and another full of thunder, and flashes, and storms; Such difference there is, saith he, betwixt a calm moderate temper, and the passionate severity of others.

3. It

3. It would prove *pernicious to a man's self*. For which I shall only give that one instance, *Luke 9. 55.* the two Disciples there, *James* and *John*, those *Sons of thunder*, being much offended with the *Samaritans*, who refused to receive our Saviour, would needs in their immoderate zeal have fire from Heaven to destroy them; For which they had a Scripture-example in the story of *Elias*. But what must have been the consequence of this? Why a while after our Saviour went up to *Jerusalem*, where he was Crucified, and therefore very good reason why fire should come upon that likewise. Nay these very persons themselves, *James* and *John*, desert and renounce him, and therefore there ought to be fire upon them also; And so they make good that saying of the wise man, and by being *righteous overmuch destroy themselves*, *Eccles. 7. 7.* Nay one of these Disciples tells us, *Joh. 1. 10, 11.* *That the world knew him not, nor received him.* Therefore why should not that likewise be destroyed by fire? Of such a large and comprehensive mischief is this sin, according to the natural consequences of it.

3. Lastly,

3. Lastly, We shall hence be persuaded to be more careful in the attaining, improving, exercising of this grace for the future. 'Tis a duty this, wherein all sorts of persons are concerned, not only those of a private condition in their dealings with one another, but likewise such as are publick Magistrates, both as to their making and executing of Laws. They who are to consult publick settlement, should have special regard to this equity and moderation, thereby to heal the minds of men, and to compose their differences. They should look upon past sufferings as happening to them, *eo modo quo grandines ac diluvia accidere solent*, and so bury them in oblivion.

I might to the many arguments already mentioned, add divers other considerations to excite men unto this virtue (would the time permit it). I cannot omit that passage out of *Seneca*, so proper to this purpose, *Quod si dii placabiles & aequi delicta potentium non statim fulminibus prosequuntur, quanto aequius est, homines hominibus prepositos miti animo exercere imperium.* If God doth not presently take vengeance of our faults with thunder from heaven, why should not men
by

by his example become gentle and mild towards one another. 'Tis a thought this, very proper for a man to revolve in his mind when he is by his passion provoked to deal with rigor and extremity towards others. Let him then consider, Am not I more under God's power than this offending person is under mine; more obnoxious to his wrath and justice than he is to me? Had he dealt with me according to my desert, I had long ago been cast into Hell: Yet I live and am spared, and do every day receive many testimonies of his kindness. Is he thus favourable to me for this end, that I may be severe and cruel to others? Hath he forgiven my Talents, that I may rigorously exact the pence from my brother? That man who hath but any sparks of Religion or ingenuity, cannot chuse but be either overwhelmed with confusion, or melted into compassion by such thoughts as these.

The End of the Thirteenth Sermon.

The

The Fourteenth Sermon.

R O M. XII. 19.

*Dearly beloved, avenge not your selves,
but rather give place unto wrath :
For it is written, Vengeance is mine,
I will repay, saith the Lord.*

I H A V E treated of late in a former Discourse concerning the virtue of *Moderation*; shewing the true nature and necessity of it, and how seasonable and proper the pressing of it hath been, and will continually be for all places and times; And more particularly for such as in any revolution are apt to think it least seasonable, who for that very reason have more need to be put in remembrance of their duty in this particular.

Now because this other subject of Revenge is of near affinity to it; being in some sense the object of it, according

to that definition of *Seneca* where he describes Clemency and Moderation to be *Temperantia animi in potestate Ulciscendi*; A temperance of mind when we have the power and opportunity of revenge; Therefore I could not but judge it a very proper Subject to be annexed to the former, and this Text as proper to found a discourse upon of this nature, as any other.

In the former part of this *Epistle*, the *Apostle* had insisted at large upon several points of Faith, more particularly upon that great Doctrine of Justification. In this *Chapter* he proceeds to lay down certain precepts of Christianity concerning practice and obedience, beginning with those that refer to God, in the three first *verses*: And amongst them, with that which is the foundation of all the rest, namely, that we wholly devote and resign up our selves unto his spiritual service, *v. 1.*

Then he proceeds to such duties as we owe to our *Neighbours*, whether, 1. Those that are fellow-members of the same Church, partakers of the same faith; from *ver. 4.* to the 13. Or 2dly, such as are enemies and persecutors, *v. 14.* Bless them which persecute you; and again, *v. 17.*

v. 17. *Recompence to no man evil for evil.* And because 'tis a duty (this) of more than ordinary difficulty, very much against the natural inclinations of men, therefore he returns again to the enforcing of it, in the words of the *Text*, and so to the end of the *Chapter*.

The *Text* is a Dissuasive from the sin of *Revenge*; in it there lye four particulars very obvious:

1. An insinuating compellation, *Dearly beloved.*
2. The Precept or Prohibition it self, *Avenge not your selves.*
3. A direction for the better observance of this precept, *But rather give place unto wrath.*
4. A Reason or Argument for the enforcing of it, *For it is written, Vengeance is mine, or belongs to me, I will repay, saith the Lord.*

I shall briefly explain the several *Terms*.

1. The *Compellation*; ἀγαπῆτοί, *Dearly beloved.* 'Tis but one word in the *Greek*, but because of the special *Emphasis* of it, signifying the most cordial love, therefore it is thus rendred in the *English*. And upon this account 'tis usually ascribed to an only child; so the 70
tran-

translate that place, *Gen. 22. 2. Thine only Son, thy dearly beloved Son.* In which sense 'tis frequently used by other *Greek Authors, Homer, Plutarch,* and others (as divers *Criticks* have observed.) It signifies the dearest and most intimate affection. The *Apostle* doth use it both here and in several other places, that by so mild and obliging a compellation he might the better insinuate and prevail with those whom he is to persuade: Suitable to his own rule, *In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.*

2. The *Precept* or *Prohibition* it self, *μη εαυτους ενδικαζετε, non vosmet ipsos defendentes.* So the *Vulgar*, very improperly both as to the force of the word and the scope of the place. There are two particulars to be enquired into for the explication of this clause:

What is meant by $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Revenging.} \\ \text{Revenging our} \\ \text{elves.} \end{array} \right.$

1. What this *ενδικαζεις*, *Ultio* or *Vindicta* is, may be very proper to be discussed, because 'tis by several *Authors* used in such various and equivocal senses; sometimes for a passion of the mind; so *Plato* defines it in his Book *de Legibus*, *Vindicta est passio iustitie sequax*; sometimes

times for a *virtue*, amongst the Catalogue of which *Aristotle* doth reckon it, *Eth. lib. 4.* And so likewise *Aquinas 2a. 2da*, making the two extremes of it to be cruelty, and too much remission or abjectness. And sometimes likewise 'tis reckoned for a *vice*, as in the *Text.* and according to the most usual acceptation of the word. — And there is reason enough why it may be referred to each of these heads, because supposing it to be the first, a *Passion*, it must likewise be capable of being both a *Virtue* and a *Vice*.

As there is in every man a natural inclination to vindicate himself from injuries, so 'tis a *Passion* that is a natural act of the appetite. As this passion is duly guided in the exercise of its acts, by the rules of justice and prudence, both as to the proper objects, acts and circumstances of it, so 'tis a *virtue*. As it doth deviate from, and transgress these rules, so 'tis a *vice*. Which may be said of all the other passions likewise, *Anger, Love, Fear, &c.* Though because of the general proclivity of men to offend in this kind, therefore the most ordinary use of the word is in this worst sense.

F f

That

That desire which a man may have of occasioning to another some trouble and inconvenience upon the account of injury suffered from him, this is not absolutely and abstractedly considered, in it self evil, but may be both lawful and commendable, provided that the thing hereby chiefly aimed at be such a moderate castigation as may be requisite for the conviction and the amendment of the offender, a keeping up the authority of Laws, and a due satisfaction for the damages we have suffered. There being a vast difference betwixt the *study of revenge*, and the *endeavour of reparation*. This latter being no ways opposite to Christian love, meekness, mutual forgiveness; God himself may remit the sin, and not hate the person, and yet he may correct the offender, to vindicate his Law, and repair his own Honour.

But now on the other hand, when the thing we chiefly aim at, is mischief to the person by whom we have been injured, though we our selves receive no benefit thereby, besides the satisfaction of our own enraged passions: Such a *wrathful retribution of evil* is properly the *sin of Revenge*; whether or no the
evil

evil that we occasion to him, be either greater, or equal, or less, to what we have suffered from him.

2. What by *revenging our selves*? This expression doth direct to the proper agent of that suffering and penalty which we may occasion to another. Though persons of a private capacity may seek to bring such as injure them to punishment, yet they must not themselves inflict it, because there are others appointed to this work, namely the publick Magistrate, whose proper office this is, *He is the Minister of God, a revenger*, *Edm. B.* the same word as in the Text, *to execute wrath upon him that doth evil*, saith the Apostle in the next Chapter, *Rom. 13. 4.* 'tis a part this of distributive justice, and therefore doth belong to Governours, either to the Supreme, to whom it doth primarily appertain, or to those who are delegated by him; who are the Conservators of humane Societies, and Guardians of Laws. Without such revengers there could be no government in the world; and therefore for private persons to invade their office, is in some sense to depose them, and consequently to destroy Government. Though even such pub-

lick persons to whose office this work doth properly belong, are not altogether exempted from the danger of this sin. Upon which account it is that Governours themselves ought not ordinarily to be Judges in their own particular concernments ; or at least not to be the inflictors of the penalty upon such as injure them. To which may be added, that such Magistrates who take delight in inflicting punishment as punishment; who do it with insolence, bitterness, contumely (which are against the common Laws of humanity) such as do not principally respect the good of the Community, and of the offending person, but have some secret regard to their own private utility, or the satisfaction of their particular anger : In such cases the Magistrate himself, whose office it is to revenge, may yet be guilty of the sin of revenge.

3. The third particular observed in the words, is a *Direction* for the better observance of this duty, in that clause, *but rather give place unto wrath*. That expression of *giving place*, δότε τόπον, *date locum*, is a Metaphorical phrase. But 'tis such a Metaphor as is not a peculiar Phraseology, but is somewhat general
and

and significant in several languages. The meaning of it is to yield and submit unto. What kind of wrath is hereby intended, is another question, fit to be discussed. There are three several senses that have each of them a fair pretence to the scope and meaning of this place.

1. It may signify the wrath of thine enemy; do not immediately fly to an opposition of it, but rather withdraw from him that is provoked. *Dum furor in cursu est, currenti cede furori.* Jacob did so to his brother *Esau*, when he was intraged against him, and resolved to kill him.

2. It may signify the wrath of God. Do not prevent or hinder *that* by revenging your self. Take heed of invading his Office. Leave him to his own work. *Commit your selves to him that judgeth righteously,* 1 Pet. 2. 23.

3. It may refer to our own wrath. To the impetuosity of which we must so far give place, as not to act any thing upon the instigation of it. *Respirate in vestro furore, neque ruite precipites, donec ira vestra deferueat.* Let it have some time to cool and abate, and take heed of being transported with it.

Each of these are suitable enough to the sense of the place, though the *two* first seem to be more agreeable to the Reason annexed.

4. Which is the fourth particular observable in the words, *For it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord,* *Ἐγὼ ἐκδικῶ,* which refers to that place, *Deut. 32. 35.* and to that *Psal. 94. 1. O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth,* Which is again repeated *Heb. 10. 30. For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, saith the Lord.*

And then it follows in the next verse of the Text, which is cited out of *Prov. 25. 21. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst give him drink.* Under which expressions of meat and drink are comprehended all kind of necessities or conveniences which his condition may require. Be kind and benevolous to him, not only in case of extreme exigence, but so often as you have opportunity of procuring any considerable advantage to his condition, *For in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head,* whereby he shall be either melted into kindness, or burnt for his obdurateness.

Some

Some think the meaning of this passage is to be restrained only to the first of these; it being against the chief scope of the place, and the highest kind of revenge for a man to aim at the exposing of another to divine wrath and vengeance; usually the roughest most obdurate tempers are to be subdued with kindness. *David* conquered *Saul* this way, and melted him into tears of repentance for his enmity against him. *Nimis durus est animus, qui si dilectionem nolit impendere, nolit rependere*, saith *St. Austin*. That man must needs be of a very savage inflexible temper, who is not to be bent by gentleness and kindness. Some conceive this phrase to be an allusion to the custom of Artificers in their dealing with metals, which when they cannot bring to fusion by putting fire under them, they use to heap live coals on the head or top of them, and by that means do cause them to melt. That man is to be utterly despaired of, as being without all sense of humanity, whom repeated kindness will not melt and dissolve.

Dr. Hammond.

But now because the most usual sense of this expression, *coals of fire*, doth denote punishment and vengeance, accord-

ding to the proper importance of it in other Scriptures, as *Psal.* 18. 8, 12, 13. and 140. 12. and several other places; Therefore this sense is not to be wholly neglected, nor is it unlawful for a man in a secondary way to have respect unto it. And 'tis most suitable to that clause in the precedent verse, *Vengeance is mine.* Though withal it must be granted, that the precept in the verse immediately following, of overcoming evil with good, doth seem to favour more the former sense.

And so much for Explication of the *Text*, both as to the *Context*, and the *Terms* of it.

The *Proposition* I would insist upon shall be this:

Prop. *Christians ought to be very cautious against this sin of revenge.*

The *Apostle* doth in this place insist much upon it, frequently repeats the prohibition to this purpose, which he endeavours to insinuate by the most loving persuasions, and to enforce by several arguments, to shew of how great moment and consequence this duty is. And 'tis withal both agreeable to the light of nature, and to several other precepts and examples, both in the *Old* and *New Testament*. And

And first, 'tis most consonant this to the clear light of nature, and such moral principles as are common to all mankind. Though I know very well, that divers eminent *Authors*, the learned *Grotius*, and others, do from hence endeavour to prove the insufficiency of Reason and Philosophy for the discovery and attainment of true virtue. Because the wisest and best of the *Heathen* do indulge themselves in this matter of revenge. To which purpose they usually cite those sayings out of *Aristotle*, where he reckons it for a virtue, and in another place where he saith, *Servile est, si contumeliose tracteris, id tolerare*. And that of *Cicero*, where he mentions revenge amongst those things, *Quæ ad jus naturæ pertinent*. Besides that Doctrine of the *Stoicks*, who were a sect of men most strict and sublime in their morality; amongst whom notwithstanding it was a principle, *Sapientem non ignoscere, non misereri*. That a wise man ought not to pardon another man's faults, nor to compassionate his sufferings. For which *Seneca* reasons thus, *Venia est pœna De Clementia. 2. 6.* *merita remissio. Ergo ei ignoscitur qui piri debuit. Sapiens autem nihil facit quod non debet.* To which may be added

added that Doctrine of the *Alchoran*, wherein the remitting of injuries, and neglect of revenge, is condemned as an impious thing.

From all which 'tis inferred, that this prohibition of revenge is a pure institution belonging to the Gospel, and Christian Religion, and not derivable from the light of nature.

But with reverence to those great Names, this will upon an impartial inquiry be found to be a mistake; all the *Agenda* of Christianity being so far from being opposite, that they are most agreeable to humane reason, as 'tis cultivated and heightned to its utmost improvement by Philosophy. As for those speeches that are cited to this purpose, they may refer to the *passion* or *virtue* of Revenge, not the *vice* of it. The same *Authors* abounding in many severe prohibitions against this *vice*. Besides the many arguments they produce of the unlawfulness and mischief of it, as the inconsistency of it with Government and Society, with several other reasons which I may have occasion to mention afterwards. And the plain truth is, there is not any one thing in morality that is capable of being made out by clearer natural

natural evidence, than the sinfulness of revenge, supposing men to live under Laws and Government, as I shall hereafter endeavour to shew.

As for *Scripture-evidence* to this purpose out of the *Old Testament*, nothing can be more express than that place, *Levit. 19. 18. Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self.* To which is annexed the same reason as in the Text, *I am the Lord.* Nor is this to be extended meerly to their persons, but to their possessions likewise. *Exod 23. 4, 5. If thou meet thine enemies ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou seest the ass of him that hateth thee, lying under his burden, thou shalt surely help with him.*

Though it cannot be denied, that amongst the judicial Laws of the *Jewish Nation*, there are some that seem to make an allowance and indulgence for the frowardness and hardness of that people in this particular (whether the revenger of blood were not commanded to kill the manslayer, see *Weemes, 2. Vol. 2. part, p. 129.*) as that concerning the liberty for the avenger of blood,
while

while his heart is hot, to pursue him that had unwittingly slain his neighbour, and if he could overtake him before he got to one of the Cities of Refuge, to be revenged of him, *Deut.* 19. 6. *Josh.* 20. 3. Besides those other Laws of retaliation, of *an eye for an eye*, and *a tooth for a tooth*; yet these Laws were not established amongst them out of any fitness or commendableness of the things in themselves absolutely considered, but only indulged by way of permission, as being most suitable to the imperfect state of that people, and for the prevention of greater mischiefs amongst them, as *Tertullian* hath stated this business, and out of him the learned *Grotius* in his Book *de jure belli & pacis*, *Lib. 2. Cap. 20. §. 10.*

Prov. 19. 11. the wise man tells us, that *'tis the discretion of a man to defer his anger, and his glory to pass over a transgression.* 'Tis the want of prudence and generosity that doth hastily transport men to the retribution of injuries.

Prov. 24. 17, 18. *Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth, Lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him to thee.* Where
not

not only the doing of mischief our selves, but the rejoicing at that which upon any other account doth happen to him, is prohibited as an unworthy thing. And *David* complains of it as very injurious dealing, that his enemies *rejoiced at his adversity*, *Psal. 35. 15.* though he had *compassion on them when they were sick, and behaved himself as to his friend or brother.*

Ezek. 25. 12. there are severe threatenings denounced against *Edom*, because he had greatly offended by taking vengeance, and revenging himself upon the house of *Judah*, *ver. 14.* *Therefore will I lay my vengeance upon Edom, according to mine anger, and according to my fury, and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord God.* And *ver. 15.* *Because the Philistines have dealt by revenge, and have taken vengeance with a despiteful heart, to destroy it for the old hatred; therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will stretch out my hands against the Philistines, and I will execute great vengeance upon them, with furious rebukes.*

But the Gospel is much more copious to this purpose, wherein our Saviour doth require an higher degree of perfection in this kind, and doth abolish those indul-

indulgences which the *Judicial Law* did admit. He expects that *Christians* should be so far from being overcome with this passion of private revenge, that they should rather suffer patiently a second and third injury, than revenge one. Which is the true meaning of that precept, *Mat. 5. 39. Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.* That expression of turning the cheek, being a usual Scripture-pharse to signify bearing evil patiently, *Isa. 50. 6. Lament. 3. 30.*

And *v. 44. I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. For if you love them that love you, what reward have you? do not even Publicans and sinners the same? But when once you come to love and do good to enemies, this will prove you to be children of the Highest, and render you perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect, ver. 48.*

Mat. 6. Having taught his Disciples that form of prayer, wherein they are to beg a conditional pardon of their own sins, *Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us.*
OF

Of which it may be said (as of the fifth Commandment, that it was the *first with promise*) so was this the *first*, the only Petition *with condition*. And having signified this form , he returns immediately after to comment upon this clause (singling it out from all the other Petitions, as laying great weight upon it) and this he doth both *positively*, ver. 14. *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, then will your Heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses.* And *negatively*, v. 15. *But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your trespasses.* By which place it appears, that he who meditates revenge, must curse himself when he prays; he must carry in his own bosom the evidence that his sins are unpardoned, and likewise a bar and incapacity, whereby he is disabled to ask or expect the forgiveness of them.

To which may be added that Precept of *being reconciled to our brother before we bring our gift to the Altar, Mat. 5.* The thoughts of revenge will render our offerings and services unacceptable. As likewise that *Parable concerning the wicked servant, Mat. 18.* who refused to forgive his fellow-servant

vant a *hundred pence*, though his Lord had remitted to him *ten thousand Talents*.

I might mention several Examples to this purpose ; that of *Joseph* towards his Berthren : that of *Job*, Chap. 31. 29. who professed that he *rejoiced not at the destruction of him that hated him ; nor lift up himself when evil found him*. That of *St. Stephen*, who prayed for those that stoned him ; saying, *Lord lay not this sin to their charge*, Acts 7. 60. And above all, that of our Saviour himself, *Who when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered he threatned not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously*, 1 Pet. 2. 23.

I proceed to some *Reasons* or Arguments for the confirmation of this *Proposition* ; And shall mention *six*.

1. *'Tis a sin against God*, the supreme Governour of the world, to whom this work of vengeance belongeth ; which is the reason in the *Text*. And therefore men who intrude upon it without his commission, do but invade his Office ; and consequently renounce their subjection to him, and put themselves out of his protection. We that are poor dependant Creatures, earthen vessels,
worms

worms and no men, think our selves highly injured and affronted when those that are in any inferior relation to us, our children or servants, shall take upon them to revenge themselves upon one another without appealing to us to do them right. Why, God is infinitely more just, powerful, omniscient, and therefore hath much more reason to resent it as an high indignity, when his creatures and vassals shall so far forget their dependance upon him as to invade his office. The *Apostle* tells us, *Jam. 1. 20. That the wrath of men worketh not the righteousness of God.* That justice which is done by a wrathful man, doth not render him righteous in the sight of God. Or God hath not appointed that violent revengeful disposition of men to be the executor of his justice; because 'tis not like to effect it with such a mixture of mercy as he will approve or accept of.

2. 'Tis *against Government*, Magistrates, Laws; those bonds of Societies, which are all needless and in vain, if every one may take a liberty of righting himself. 'Tis the very end of Magistracy to prevent this. He is made

G g

a pub.

a publick Avenger , to distribute rewards and punishments according to stated Laws, that private men might not intermeddle with it. 'Tis true indeed , as for such barbarous savage people as live wild, without being associated and united by those bonds of justice, 'tis no wonder if such be continually retaliating of injuries according to the opportunities and advantages they can get over one another ; there being no other remedy for men, who live according to a state of nature, amongst whom there is no person or place for appeal. And thus likewise is it with such publick persons, betwixt whom there is no common Judge to state and vindicate their differences (as Sovereign Princes are) there being in such cases no other remedy (unless they can accommodate things by Treaty) but that War must follow, and the sword decide their Controversies. But when men are once associated under Government and Laws, they must then have recourse to such as are deputed to this office of vindicating common justice. Have you received an injury, saith *Quintilian*, *Est lex, forum, judex*

Index nisi vos jure vindicari pudet ; There are Laws, Courts, Judges, unless your cause be such as you are ashamed or afraid to bring it unto the trial and determination of Law. Though even in this way 'tis not for every trivial offence that we are to trouble our neighbour ; nor for matters of moment, till all other ways of accommodation have been first offered and tried, Law being a kind of War, which must be the last means for Peace.

3. 'Tis against the very scope and spirit of Christianity, which consists in self-denial, taking up the Cross, meekness, loving our enemies, forgiving such as trespass against us. The great rule of Christianity is not to do to others as they do to us, but as we would have them do to us. *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do you the same unto them, Mat. 7. 12.*

4. 'Tis against humanity ; *Inhumanum verbum est ultio*, saith Seneca. 'Tis proper enough for wild brute creatures, but not for men. Nothing becomes humane nature more than gentleness and humanity. *Laus humanitatis potius quam voluptas ultionis concupiscenda* Quintil.

est, saith one of the *Roman* Orators. *The pleasure of revenge ought not to stand in any competition with the praise of humanity.* Nothing is more universally necessary for the peace and welfare of humane Societies, than mutual pardon and forbearance ; because every one must frequently stand in need of it for himself, and therefore must be ready to extend it to others. He that hath any real sense of his own frail condition, will find reason enough not to take all advantages he may against others.

5. 'Tis *against our own quiet* and welfare ; which consists in such a serene and becalmed spirit as will not *let the Sun go down upon our wrath.* The study of revenge will be a means to keep wounds green and festering, whereas otherwise they might heal. *Multi leves injurias altius sibi dimiscere dum vindicant.* This gives impression to a slight injury, and makes it wound deep when we resent it with revengeful thoughts. *Maledicta, si irascaris, agnita videntur, spreta exolescunt.* He that neglects an injury, doth blunt the edge of it. *Provoking words* (saith the Son of *Syrach*, *Eccles.*

Senec.

Eccles. 28. 12.) are like a coal of fire, which if a man blow upon, it will kindle the more; but if he spit upon it, 'twill go out.

Besides; that it will be a means to multiply and renew fresh injuries upon us. If we cannot stop at the first blow, why should we expect that our adversary should stop at the second? He that will strike when he is not provoked, will do so much more when he is smitten again, and so we shall but help to draw the saw of contention, and multiply sufferings upon our selves, by endeavouring to retaliate them upon others.

6. Revenge is in it self as great, and in many respects a much greater sin, than the first injury whereby 'tis occasioned. *Quid refert inter provocantem & provocatum, nisi quod ille prior in malificio deprehenditur, & ille posterior.* All the difference betwixt the provoker and revenger is this, That the one is first, the other second in the mischief. *Et quid refert primus pecces an ultimus?* And what advantage is there for a man to be first or second in an evil action? It cannot certainly be any good argument, that be-

Tertul de Patientia.

De Ira.

cause such an one sinned first, therefore we will second him: *Qui dolorem regerit tantum excusatus peccat* (saith Seneca) *He that doth revenge, doth sin as well as the other, though he have this excuse for it, that he was first provoked to it.* And yet in another place he saith, *Non dubitabo dicere magis improbum esse eum; qui illatam ulciscitur quam qui infert injuriam.* I shall not doubt to affirm that man of the two to be the most wicked, who revenges, than he who inflicts an injury. *Qui replicat multiplicat.* *Alter principium malo dedit, alter modum abstulit.* One gives a beginning, the other growth, multiplication, continuance, and consequently endeavours to make it without measure or end. The first violates some particular branch of the Law, but the revenge of that wrong doth depose the whole Law, and puts it out of Office. He that hath newly received an injury, and hath the sense of it fresh upon his own mind, doth thereby better understand the vexation and grievousness of it; and therefore for him to deal hardly with others, whilst he hath this sense fresh upon him, must needs from hence receive an aggravation, *Qui exemplo peccat, bis peccat,* he

he having immediately before experienced the deformity and mischief of that sin in another.

If it be objected against all this which hath been delivered, that we read sometimes in *Scripture* of good men who are said to rejoice at the sight of vengeance upon others, *Psal.* 58. 10. *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance.* And elsewhere they are said to pray for vengeance, *Jer.* 11. 20. *O Lord of Hosts that judgest righteously, let me see thy vengeance upon them.* So *Sr. Paul*, *2 Tim.* 4. 14. speaking of *Alexander the Coppersmith* doing him much harm, adds, *the Lord reward him according to his works.* And *Revel.* 6. 10. 'Tis said, *that the souls under the Altar do cry with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth.* Besides several imprecations in other places.

Chap. 20.
12.

To this it may be answered: 1. That as a man may pity men under those sufferings which he may acknowledge to be just upon them, so he may rejoice at those sufferings as they are accomplishments of Divine justice, though not as

they are revenge for his particular injuries. 2. To speak unto God that he would vindicate us, is but to appeal unto the supreme Judge that he would do us right, *to commit our cause unto him that judgeth righteously*, as is said of our Saviour, *1 Pet. 1. 23*. Though this should be in such a manner as may tend to the conviction, reformation and forgiveness of the offending person, rather than to his ruin and condemnation; unless it be for such extraordinary persons as have a spirit of discerning, and are able to penetrate into the true state of men as to their implacable incorrigible condition. Other persons should consider *what spirit they are of*, as our Saviour tells the Disciples *James and John*. Every man may not call for fire from heaven to destroy others, though *Elias* did and might.

The End of the Fourteenth Sermon.

The

The Fifteenth Sermon.

R O M. XII. 19.

*Dearly beloved, Avenge not your selves,
but rather give place unto wrath :
For it is written, Vengeance is mine,
I will repay, saith the Lord.*

THere are these three things I
would insist upon in the *Ap-
plication* of this Point.

1. To *examine* whether we
are not guilty of this sin ?

2. To *convince* men of the deformi-
ty and mischief of it.

3. To *quicken* and excite them unto
a greater degree of watchfulness over
themselves, in respect of the temptati-
ons to this vice for the future.

1. To *examine* whether we our selves
are not guilty of this sin ? There is no
one thing wherein the corruption of
nature

nature is more apt to exert it self, than in offences of this kind, as relating to that first fundamental principle of nature, which is self-preservation; nor is it every ordinary degree of grace and virtue that will exempt a man from the power of this sin. According to that measure which there is in any, either of impotence, pride, cowardise, cruelty, narrowness of mind, selfishness, in such a proportion must that man be of a vindicative temper. And on the other side, he that is open and free in his way of converse, apt to put the best construction upon things, to take more notice of the virtues and kindnesses of men than of their failings, not subject to jealousies and evil surmisings, but of a noble generous temper and carriage, lifted up above the common level of vulgar minds, in such a degree will he be exempted from this sin.

But now because there is a vindicative anger and indignation against others, which is our duty, namely, that which is against offenders; and that every man is apt to palliate and excuse his
own

own revengeful temper and carriage by pretending this ; therefore I shall briefly suggest these two Rules, whereby the truth of it may be discovered, whether it be a Virtue or Vice. To examine whether,

1. Our anger be not more against the Persons than the Offences.

And, 2. whether it be not directed more against offences as they are injuries to us, than as they are violations of the Divine Law. In both which cases we fall under the guilt of this sin.

1. We are to examine whether our anger be not directed more against the persons of offenders than against their offences. If so, tis not the virtue but the sin of revenge. And this may be known by our readiness to exert any act of charity towards the offending person, in pitying and grieving for him, and applying the most effectual means for his conviction and amendment. Our *Saviour* himself was angry at the sins of *Jerusalem*, and yet he wept over and bemoaned their destruction. So did *David* for his enemies, *Psal.* 35. 13, 14. *When they were*
sick

sick I put on sackcloth, and humbled my soul with fasting: I behaved my self as though he had been my friend or brother; I bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother.

On the other side, when we have no kind of compassion towards them, nor charity for them, but are continually reviling their persons, aggravating their faults, adding to and increasing their sufferings, 'tis a sure sign this of a vindictive temper.

2. We are to examine whether our anger be not more directed against offences as they are injuries to us, than as they are violations of the Divine Law. Which will appear by that sense which we have of such transgressions, wherein we our selves are not particularly reflected upon, though God be thereby highly dishonoured. If in such cases a man be calm and altogether unconcerned, if he have little or no displeasure against persons that are highly debauched and vicious, nay if he indulge himself in such kind of vices, 'tis altogether in vain for such a man in his punishing of offenders,

ders to pretend to zeal for the upholding of Law and Justice, and the glory of God. 'Tis a disguise that which every one may see through. And though the punishment inflicted by such may be righteous, and in it self justly deserved, yet as it comes from them under these qualifications, 'tis not so much justice as revenge.

2. In the next place we may hence be *convinced* of that deformity and mischief which there is in this sin. There are these six things that do usually accompany it, either as *causes*, *effects*, or *properties* of it, *Folly*, *Pride*, *Impotence*, *Cowardise*, *Cruelty*, *Ingratitude*.

1. *Folly*: The meditating of revenge is stiled the *resting* or *cherishing* of *anger* in our *bosoms*. And the *Wise-man* tells us, that *anger* *resteth* in the *bosom* of *fools*, *Eccles.* 7. 9. 'Tis the fool that rageth, *Prov.* 14. 16. The discretion of a man will teach him to defer his anger, *Prov.* 19. 11. And by the Rule of Contraries it must be his folly to precipitate and hasten to revenge.

Would

Would not that man be counted exceeding fond and imprudent, who if a horse kick him, will think himself bound to recalcitrate or kick again, or to bite the dog by which he is bitten? You will say, those creatures want reason, and do not understand the injury they do. *Eo loco sit tibi quisquis consilio caret*, saith Seneca. *Why, so perhaps may those foolish men, by whom you have been unwarily provoked.*

2. *Pride*: Every little injury will seem great, where men seem great to themselves. 'Tis from the opinion and conceit which they have of their own worth, that they are apt to aggravate every trespass as an high indignity. Fierceness doth arise from Pride. He that is puffed up with high imaginations of himself and of his own deserts, *Jove dignas concipit iras*. What? such a man as he? of so much worth to be so unworthily used by such an one? and thus (as one well expresseth it) *as the boar whets and sharpens his tusks in his own foam, so doth a proud man excite and sharpen his own indignation and revenge in the frothy imagination of his own worth.* This is the reason why our
Savi-

Survivor doth join together meekness and lowliness, self-denial, and taking up the Cross.

3. *Impotence*, weakness, narrowness of soul, which is apt to make a man suspicious, to startle and be provoked at every shadow. *Quo infirmiores corporis iracundi*. Persons that are old, sick, weak, are usually upon this account most froward and vindictive. Whereas he that hath any true courage and greatness of mind will think it below him so much as to take notice of every little injury. *Non est magnus animus quem incurvat injuria*. 'Tis not every little blast that can shake him who is of a steady and noble courage. To be always fretting and aggravating of injuries, *formicarum & muscarum est* (saith Plutarch) belongs to such little impotent creatures as Ants and Flies. And to the same purpose Seneca, *Passilli hominis est & miseri repetere mordentem*. 'Tis the property of small and mean wretches to be always retaliating. *Mures & formica, si manum admoventis, ora convertunt*. Imbecilia, se ladi putant franguntur. The more impotent any thing is, the more suspicious and vindictive

cative is it. There are many other sayings to this purpose amongst the *Heathen* Writers. I cannot omit that one more out of the *Satyrift, Juvenal. Sat.* 13.

——— *Quippe minuti*
Semper & infirmi est animi exiguique
voluptas
Ultio, continuò sic collige, quod vindictâ
Nemo magis gaudet quam fœmina, &c.

I have the rather mentioned several of these *Sayings* out of the *Heathen* Writers in confirmation of what before I asserted, That revenge is a sin against the light of Nature, and that the rules of Philosophy are not in this kind so defective as some have suggested.

4. *Cruelty*: This naturally follows from the other. The less confidence any one hath in his own courage, the more rigorous and severe must he be in taking the advantages which he hath against another. *Ultio est æstus & fervor animi turbidi, & mentis efferrata.* *Revenge is the æstuation of an enraged*

raged mind. 'Tis stiled *humani feritas*. It transports a man to savageness and ferity. Upon which account it is that Civil Wars are of all others the most cruel, because they are commonly managed by the dregs of the people, such kind of persons as have no true generosity, which renders them fierce and cruel.

5. *Comardice*: This likewise is an usual concomitant of the other. Nothing is more natural to men than to make themselves the rule and measure whereby to judge of others. And therefore it cannot be but that such persons must be very obsequious and timorous towards all such as are above them, out of an apprehension of what they themselves would do upon the like advantage. Such persons as are usually most fierce in asserting a Cause when it hath prevailed, are usually least serviceable and courageous in vindicating of it when it is low. *Ultio est desperationi proxima, etsi videri vult fortitudo*: It puts on the disguise of gallantry and courage, which cannot
H h bear

bear the least shadow of dishonour, but it proceeds from no better a ground than timorousness and despair. All kind of Insolence and Tyranny whatsoever being founded upon fear and cowardice.

6. *Ingratitude*: The very same unworthy temper and base principle, which makes revenge seem an ease, will make thanks seem a burden. That which aggravates injuries will diminish kindnesses. He who is ready to account every wrong intolerable, will be apt to esteem every favour a due debt.

Add to all this, that 'tis a sin which will indispose a man for the duties of piety, render our services unacceptable, put us into an incapacity of having our sins forgiven, or so much as expecting or praying for it.

Besides that it will render a man feared and hated of all kind of persons whatsoever, as being accompanied with a train of such vile concomitants, as I have before mentioned. He who wrongs one, doth thereby threaten all whom he hath
power

power to hurt. And 'tis too true a saying, *Oderunt quem metunt, Men hate those whom they fear.*

But amongst all others this vice is more especially hateful in four sorts of people (as a certain *Author* hath observed.)

*Robinson's
Essays.*

1. In men of power and authority; whose proper office it is in a legal regular way, to execute wrath upon evil-doers, and to vindicate others from injury. If they become guilty in this kind themselves, they commit murder with the sword of Justice; they transform themselves from Gods to Devils; and become wickednesses in high places.

2. In such persons as have been obliged by acts of kindness and friendship, which adds a peculiar aggravation to revengeful injurious dealing. *Had it been an enemy that had reproached me, then I could have born it; or if he that hated me, had lifted up himself against me, I would have hid my self from him: But it was thou, my friend, and my acquaintance, Psal. 55. 12, 13.*

3. *Professors of Religion*; who are under the highest obligations and restraints from offending in this kind, *Gen. 20. 11.* when *Abraham* came to a place where *the fear of God was not*, there was no kind of injurious dealing but he thought he might expect from them; but to meet with this from such as make profession of *Religion*, must needs have in it this aggravation of a surprizal and disappointment, as being so directly against the principles they pretend to.

4. Such as are *Poor*, *Prov. 28. 3.* *A poor man that oppresseth, is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.* Such an one is most like to be violent and rapacious, because of his necessities. And yet 'tis directly against his interest, as being most liable to suffer by such dealing himself.

5. To which I may add a *fifth* sort, *namely*, such as have but lately received any signal deliverance or mercy themselves, to whom their Lord hath freely remitted *ten thousand Talents*, for them immediately after

after to be rigorous with *their fellow servants* in exacting *an hundred pence*, hath in it a great unworthiness and incongruity. Such as have but lately experimented what a suffering condition is, and can tell with what inward vexation and regret of mind they were affected at the hard revengeful dealing of others towards them; for such men to endeavour to bring others into the same state, the evil whereof they have so lately tasted, hath in it a peculiar aggravation.

3. The *third* and last particular to be insisted upon, is to *quicken* and excite men unto a greater degree of watchfulness over themselves in respect of the temptations to this vice for the future. I have urged several arguments to this purpose already. To which I shall add some few other Considerations by way of Motive.

1. To be ready to pardon and forget injuries is an argument of *generosity and greatness of mind*, Prov. 16,

32. *He that is slow to anger, is better*
H h 3
than

than the mighty; and he that ruleth his own spirit, than he that takes a City. 'Tis one of the properties

Ethic 4.

whereby the Philosopher doth describe a magnanimous generous man *μεγαλόθυτος, & μνησικακός, ὅδε τιμοφύλακός,* that he is not any deep resentor of injuries, nor is he vindicative of them.

'Tis from the same root that a Man is made benign and grateful to friends, which renders him gentle and exorable towards enemies. And though it be a noble generous thing to contend in benefits, not to be outdone in kindnesses; yet not so in injuries. *Illic vinci turpe est, hic vincere.* That man hath the greatest mind who can subdue his enemies by suffering and forgiving, and those are the most ingenuous conquests which are made over the minds and affections of men by kindness. According to that old *Motto*, *Nobile vincendi genus patientia.* Nothing renders a man more venerable and amiable than this readiness to forgive. As for such Cases wherein 'tis not safe to pardon, there the exacting of due punishment is not cruelty but

but just severity, and a political virtue ; but when there is no such publick danger, when there may be any hopes of winning and obliging men by kindness, 'tis not then only less profitable, but likewise less glorious to pursue them with punishments. How do we reverence the memories, and rise up at the mention of the names of such persons as have in former ages been famous for their Clemency and Indulgence? *Camillus*, *Aristides*, *Socrates*, and *Cæsar*, of whom 'tis said, that he was *in Ulciscendo lenissi-* *Sutton.*
mus, apt to forget nothing so much as injuries. And *Cicer*, no great lover or flatterer of him, tells him, *Nil habit nec fortuna tua majus, quam ut possis, nec natura tua melius, quam ut velis, conservare quamplurimos.* That herein did consist the true greatness of his fortune, that he was able, and the goodness of his nature that he was willing to shew favour to his *Adversaries*. And on the other side, with what horreur and averſation do we think of such as have been full of fierceness and immaturity?

2. A *Second particular* I would suggest, is, That we would consider what difference there is betwixt the advantages to be acquired by *Revenging* and *Pardoning* of Injuries.

By occasioning some hurt and damage to an Adversary, we may procure some satisfaction to our own private particular passions. But on the other side, his prosperity and vertue will redound to the publick advantage.

The pleasure of revenge is but short and momentany; that which ariseth from the conscience of honest and worthy actions, is lasting and permanent.

By revenge a man is but even with his enemy, but by pardoning he is superior to him.

He that suffers injury, is but assaulted; but he that studies revenge is overcome. *Be not overcome of evil.*

Men are very averse from yielding to their Adversaries; but he that hath a revengeful mind, doth that which is much worse, *he gives place to the Devil, Ephes. 4. 27.* who may be said to subdue us when he doth by

by his instruments provoke us to this sin.

By revenge we may perhaps en-
damage our adversaries estate or body,
but we do withal thereby hurt our own
souls; whereas by pardoning and re-
lieving him we do that which will
be advantageous both to him and our
selves.

'Tis made a question amongst
some, Which is most eligible, *whether to have one friend more, or one enemy less?* Whether to add to our
help, or substract from our opposition?
But without all scruple it must needs
be more desirable, to effect both these,
namely, both to get one friend more, and
one enemy less. Which can only
be done by subduing them with kind-
ness.

3. Though this be a duty always
seasonable as to the habit, yet it is
more particularly necessary as to
our exerting the acts of it when we
approach before God in any solemn
duty.

The duty of *Prayer*, men must
lift up holy hands without wrath, 1 Tim.
2. 8.

Hearing

Hearing the word, receive with meekness the ingrafted word, Jam. I. 21.

Particularly *the Lord's Supper*, which is therefore stiled a *Communion*, because of that mutual love and agreement which it supposeth amongst those that partake of it. There was a strict prohibition of *Leaven* in the celebrating of the *Passover*, and what was thereby signified the Apostle may inform us, where he speaks of the *leaven of malice and revenge*, 1 Cor. 5. 8. Mat. 5. 23. *If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembrest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift, and go, first be reconciled to him.* Though *Sacrifices and Oblations* were a duty of the first Table, and one of the principal parts of Religion; yet without this fraternal love and forbearance, it will not be acceptable. And 'tis in vain for men to pretend to acts of Piety, who are negligent in duties of Charity; and God will have this kind of *mercy rather than sacrifice*. The Apostle tells us, that the giving of *alms is a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour*, Phil.

4. 18. And yet in another place he tells us, that though a man should give all his goods to feed the poor, yet without this charity it would profit him nothing. So necessary is this to the rendring of our persons and services acceptable. 1 Cor. 13.

For the better observance of our duty in this particular, be pleased to take notice of these few *Directions*.

1. Labour to see the hand of Providence in every evil that befalls you; this will take us off from revengeful thoughts against the instruments of our sufferings. This was that which made Job so patient, Job 1. 21. his ascribing the losses he had by the *Sabeans* and *Chaldeans* to God's Providence. And so David when Shimei^{2 Sam. 16.} railed at him, pacified himself with^{11.} this consideration, *The Lord hath bid him.*

2. Labour to get a true sense of your own sins and great unworthiness. Where sins lye heavy, injuries will lye light. The more humble any man is, the less revengeful will he be.

3. Be

3. Be very cautious to prevent the rising, or however to suppress the growth of anger, *Let not the Sun go down upon it.* That which is but anger when we go to bed, may rise up malice.

Sen. de Ira.

4. Consider, that there are no kind of injurious persons but upon cool deliberate thoughts we may find sufficient reason not to revenge our selves upon. *Aut potentior, aut imbecillior, lasit: si imbecillior, parce illi; si potentior, tibi.* If he be much your inferior, spare him out of charity and generosity; if more potent, spare your self out of wisdom. Is he a profest enemy? he doth but according to his kind. Have we deserved it from him? he gives us but our due. Is he a good man? we should forgive him because God doth. Is he a wicked person? we may well forbear him, considering that dreadful vengeance he is exposed to from God, both for that and all his other sins. Is he a friend? we should the rather submit to some injuries, because we have received former kindnesses from him.

It

It was a desperate speech that of *Cosmus Duke of Florence*, Though we read that we are commanded to forgive our enemies; yet we no where read that we are commanded to forgive our friends. Whereas this follows a majori, if enemies, much more friends; for that very reason whereby *Job* did humble and appease all impatient thoughts, *Shall we receive good from their hands, and shall we not receive evil?* So that I say, there is no kind of provocation we can meet with, but may afford some ground or occasion for our forgiving of it.

I could not think of any fitter subjects with which to take my leave of this place, than those that I have been lately insisting upon, concerning *Gentleness* and *Moderation*, mutual forbearance and forgiveness of one another; which are so universally seasonable for all times and places, of such general advantage both as to publick and private welfare, so peculiarly suited to the main drift and spirit of the Gospel. And I should esteem it for a very great happiness and success, if I might be any ways instrumental to emancipate the minds
of

of men from those narrow and fierce principles whereby they are so easily apt to be provoked to keenness and severity one against another, to the disturbance of Society, and the taking men off from the quiet and comfort of their conditions.

The Scripture tells us, that 'tis this virtue which I have now been exhorting unto, that must render us *perfect*, as our *Heavenly Father is perfect*; that must raise us up unto the highest and nearest resemblance unto the Deity; that must promote our inward comfort, and our outward peace. And therefore I cannot more fitly shut up all, than with that Valediction of the *Apostle's* with which he concludes his *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*,

2 Cor. 13.
11.

Finally, Brethren, farewell: Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

FINIS.



OF the Principles and Duties of
Natural Religion: Two Books.
By the Right Reverend Father in God,
Dr. *John Wilkins*, Lord Bishop of *Che-*
ster. To which is added, A Sermon
Preach'd at his Funeral, by *William*
Lloyd, D. D. Dean of *Bangor*, and Chap-
lain in Ordinary to His Majesty. The
Fourth Edition.

Printed for R. Chiswell, W. Battersby,
and C. Brome.

O the Principles and Duties of
 Natural Religion: Two Books.
 By the Right Reverend Father in God,
 Dr. John Wesley, Lord Bishop of Chester.
 To which is added, A Sermon
 Preach'd at his R. Highness's
 Chapel, D. D. Dean of the
 Chapel of St. James's Palace. The
 Fourth Edition.



Printed for R. Childwell, W. Bamberger,
 and C. Brown.